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BY  
**JOHN ESTEN COOKE.**



- I.—FAIRFAX. . . . .  
II.—HILT TO HILT. . . . .  
III.—HAMMER AND RAPIER.



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**NEW YORK.**



# HAMMER AND RAPIER.

BY

JOHN ESTEN COOKE,

AUTHOR OF

"SURREY OF EAGLES' NEST," "FAIRFAX," "HILT TO HILT," ETC.



NEW YORK:

*Carleton, Publisher, Madison Square.*

LONDON: S. LOW, SON, & CO.

MDCCCLXX.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1870, by  
GEO. W. CARLETON,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern  
District of New York.

Stereotyped at the  
WOMEN'S PRINTING HOUSE,  
Cor. Avenue A and 8th St., New York.

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# HAMMER AND RAPIER.

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## I.

### MANASSAS.

ON the night of the 17th of July, 1861, a man, standing upon the earthworks at Manassas, was looking toward Centreville.

This man was of medium height — thin, but muscular — with a sallow countenance, lips covered by a heavy black mustache, scant locks at the temples, and deep, dark eyes, in which might be read the slumbrous spirit of “fight” observable in the eyes of the blood-hound.

As he looked, silent and motionless, toward Centreville, something which resembled a shooting star rose slowly from the summit of the woods, described a curve, and then descended. Another followed; then another, red and baleful.

Thirty minutes afterwards the hoof-strokes of a horseman were heard; a voice asked for General Beauregard; the silent man went forward, and opening the dispatch which the courier brought, perused it with calm attention. That dispatch an-

nounced that Gen. Bonham, commanding the advance force of the Southern army, had retired before the "Grand Army" of the United States, and was now in position upon the heights of Centreville, six miles from Manassas.

What was the "Grand Army," and upon what errand had it come? The reply to these questions would fill an octavo, but fortunately everybody can answer them without prompting. The great masses of blue soldiers—infantry, cavalry, and artillery—had come to "crush the rebellion," by one great "on to Richmond;" a short, sharp, and decisive campaign was to terminate all, and the broken chain of the Union would be mended promptly by the huge clashing sledge-hammer of battle.

In regard to the time required to effect this end, there was little difference of opinion at the North. One journalist wrote, "The nations of Europe may rest assured that Jeff. Davis & Co. will be swinging from the battlements of Washington, at least by the Fourth of July; we spit upon a later and longer deferred justice." Another said, "Let us make quick work; the 'rebellion,' as some people designate it, is an unborn tadpole—a 'local commotion'—a strong, active pull together will do our work effectually in thirty days." A third said, "No man of sense can for a moment doubt that this much-ado-about-nothing will end in a month. The rebels, a mere band of ragamuffins, will fly like chaff before the wind of our approach."

These vaticinations had inspired the people of the North with a sort of madness. The thirst for battle



and conquest burned in every vein. Vast crowds of volunteers rushed to the standard, and in their hands were placed the best and most approved weapons for the great blow to be struck at the South.

At the beginning of July this army numbered over fifty thousand men, and never did troops take the field more admirably equipped. Long trains of excellent rifled artillery; rifled muskets, with barrels shining like silver; carbines, pistols, sabres; luxurious rations, preserved meats, condensed milk, coffee already ground and mingled with sugar, wines, cordials, liqueurs; 'havelocks' to keep off the burning southern sun, buskins to exclude the southern dust, oilcloths to protect from southern dews—such were some of the appliances for fighting and campaigning which the men of the Grand Army brought with them when they advanced upon Manassas.

At that place, soon to become historic, Beauregard awaited them, with twenty thousand men, which he had disposed behind earthworks along the southern bank of Bull Run—a little stream which, rising in the neighborhood of Aldie, winds about amid fields and roads until it falls into the Occoquan.

We have seen that, on the 17th of July, the Grand Army had pushed forward to Centreville after Bonham, who retired before them. They had gutted Annandale and Fairfax; burned Germantown; continued their way; and now, on the night of this 17th of July, paused in front of the Centreville Heights to take breath before advancing upon the muzzles of the Southern cannon.

Beauregard was quickly in the saddle, and couriers

were seen galloping in every direction, carrying orders to the various commanders. These orders were: Get the troops under arms; form line of battle; the enemy will be here at daylight.

A solitary officer at the same time left Manassas at full speed, and disappeared toward the mountains. He carried to Gen. Johnson, facing Patterson in the Valley, the message from Beauregard: "If you wish to help me, now is the time."

Beauregard hastened then toward the front. On the way, an officer said to him:

"The battle will be here, General?"

"Yes."

"The battle of 'Bull Run.' That is a bad name."

"It is as good as 'The Cowpens,' was the reply."

At midnight the troops were in line of battle, grasping their muskets, or crouching beside the cannon, whose grim muzzles gleamed in the watch-fires.

Beauregard's right, under Ewell, was at Union Mills; his centre, under Longstreet, at Blackburn's and Mitchell's fords; his left, under Cocke and Evans, near Stonebridge, in front of whose picturesque brown arch the huge trees had been felled, forming an abattis. This line was eight miles long.

The first attack was expected at Mitchell's ford, the centre of the Southern line where, behind the cannon frowning from the embrasures above the ford and level stretch beyond, the gray infantry were lying in line of battle, in the pine thickets.

Toward daylight a dull, muffled sound came borne upon the wind from the direction of Centreville. It was Bonham's column falling back. Then some shots

resounded,—the calvary rear guard were skirmishing with the advance of the enemy.

Then, as day approached, dusky gray masses appeared beyond the stream; the rumble of artillery made the woods murmur; half an hour afterwards Bonham was within the lines.

As broad day dawned, a sudden roar came from the hill beyond the stream,—Kemper's battery, which had just saluted the advancing enemy, came back at a gallop—the signal gun of the first Manassas had been fired.

An hour afterwards the Grand Army was in face of Beauregard—their splendid cavalry was seen opening right and left, and unmasking their superb artillery,—a thundering salvo came, the shell tearing through the trees, and blowing up caissons—the drama had begun.

The first design of Gen. McDowell, commanding the Federal army had been to turn the Southern right. "My personal reconnoissance of the roads to the South," he wrote, "had shown that it was not practicable to carry out the *original plan* of turning the enemy's position on their right.

The alternative, therefore, was to turn the extreme left of his position." What is called "The Battle of the Eighteenth" showed Gen. McDowell the impracticable nature of his first design.

This was scarcely more than a skirmish, but an obstinate one. Longstreet was there at Blackburn's ford, with twelve hundred muskets—the troops occupying the level, low grounds, unprotected, except by a sort of elongated mole hill, which they had thrown up with their bayonets. Behind this they were lying down.

On the opposite side of the stream, the ground was high, wooded, and excellent for attack. The advance force of the enemy occupying it was about three thousand infantry, with artillery.

At ten o'clock the attack began, under cover of an artillery fire, and Longstreet's advance was speedily driven across the stream. Then the enemy pressed forward with cheers.

But they gained nothing. They were met by a close and destructive fire of musketry, and fell back. Then they charged again, and were again repulsed. They charged a third time, — nearly gained the bank, but were driven back at the point of the bayonet, and retired.

Longstreet, calm, silent, and smoking his cigar, went to his artillery on the slope in rear, and directed the "duel" which now began between the opposing guns. His battery was the "Washington Artillery" of New Orleans, and it fired superbly. After four years' fighting, in half a hundred battles, it attained no greater skill than it displayed in this first action. As the guns now opened, and the enemy replied, — their shell tearing down limbs of trees, and screaming like unloosed devils, — the infantry, crouching in the plain, looked up with a sort of wondering, childish curiosity. When a sudden crash across the stream was heard, and a cloud of smoke rose from a blown-up caisson, they laughed and cheered like school-boys.

The assault on Longstreet showed that Beauregard's right could not be turned. As to his centre, at Mitchell's ford, there was even less hope of breaking through the earth-works bristling with cannon, behind which,

in the pines, were drawn up the long lines of bayonets. Even if the blue masses were able to sweep over those sullen war-dogs, awaiting with grim muzzles and burning port fires, like the glare of red eyes, they would find still in their path beyond, that obstinate hedge of steel behind which the lightning slumbered. The centre, — on the straight road to Manassas, — was thus even less “practicable” than the right. The left only remained.

It was to the left, then, that the brave and skillful McDowell turned his eyes. There is no evidence that he was disheartened. He had about fifty thousand infantry, nine regiments of cavalry, and twelve batteries of rifled artillery, numbering forty-nine gns. Beauregard had twenty-one thousand eight hundred and thirty-three muskets, twenty-nine pieces of artillery, almost all smooth-bore, and about three companies of cavalry, — for Johnston, it must be remembered, had not yet arrived. Thus McDowell could bring more than two to one of all arms, against his adversary.

Does any reader question the accuracy of this statement? We reply that Gen. Beauregard is our authority. His own numbers he states officially; the enemy's he states upon Federal authority.

It will thus be understood that General McDowell did not despair. As to the army, and the great crowd of camp-followers, they would have regarded the expression of a doubt as to the ultimate result, a species of insult. Never did a stranger or more motley rout than that crowd of hangers-on, assemble in the wake of an army. A ship leaves foam in its wake as it moves, — the Grand Army seemed to carry with it a

great mass of scum. Editors, idlers, Congressmen, correspondents, ladies even, flocked to Centreville as to a festival. None seemed to regard it as a festival of death at all, but rather as a day of carnival. While waiting for the thunder from "the mysterious Virginia woods," the crowd moved to and fro, ruffled its plumes, rustled its silks, drank its champagne, cracked its jests, made its bets, and speculated upon the delightful jaunt it would make to Richmond, after riding over the battle-field, strewn with the rebel dead,—once their brethren.

Does any reader say that this is rhetoric—mere fancy? Alas! it is true; and whether it pleases or offends matters little. Truth is no respecter of events or persons, and is her own vindication. It was the late Mr. Lincoln who uttered that profound and solemn maxim, worthy of the great monarch of the Jews,—  
"You cannot avoid history!"

That singular spectacle took place on Friday and Saturday, the 19th and 20th of July. Gen. McDowell had no part in it. There is a personage more bitter, bloody, and implacable than the soldier: it is the civilian. The Federal commander had too great a weight upon his shoulders to laugh and caper. The great problem was unsolved; Beauregard was still in his path; the perilous flank movement of the United States forces against the Confederate left absorbed McDowell's whole attention.

On the southern side of Bull Run the aspect of affairs had undergone a very great change. The officer sent to Johnston had killed his horse, but he had delivered his message in time. By noon on



Saturday, the 20th, the bulk of Johnston's "Army of the Shenandoah"—about 8,000 men—was at Manassas. At midnight, Johnston, the cold, calm, silent Virginian, was consulting with Beauregard, the fiery, but self-possessed and reticent Creole. Upon the tanned and ruddy face of Johnston, with its English side-whiskers, its fixed gray eye, and iron mouth, as upon the brunette countenance of Beauregard with its "fighting jaw," broad brow, and eyes inflamed by watching, was seen by those around them, the expression of a firm and moveless purpose.

That was to deliver battle where they were, to put all upon the issue, and to drive the enemy back, or die.

An army leader should have the spring of the tiger, and the obstinate hold of the bull-dog. It is not mere eulogy but truth to say that the Virginian and the Louisianian had both—the first more of the the last—the last more of the first.

At two hours past midnight—that is to say, toward dawn of Sunday, July the 21st, couriers reached Manassas with important intelligence. A reconnoissance beyond the stream, in front of Stonebridge, had developed the fact that Gen. McDowell was massing his army on the Warrenton road, leading from Centreville across Stonebridge, toward the South, and that every probability existed of an attack in force, at an early hour in the morning, upon the Confederate left.

Sitting in a private room of the small house at Manassas, which Beauregard then occupied as his head-quarters, the two Generals listened to this in-

telligence, dismissed every one, consulted, and determined upon their plan of action.

It was simple, and was suggested by Beauregard—that active, vigorous, and trenchant mind of cultivated acumen and trained genius. As soon as the movements of the enemy had fully established the design attributed to them to turn the Southern left flank, the Confederate right and centre was to throw itself across Bull Run, advance straight upon Centreville, assail the Federal forces in flank and reverse, and cut off, break to pieces, and capture or destroy them.

This movement required coolness, nerve, and skill. Ewell, Longstreet, and Bonham were relied on. At four o'clock the plan was all arranged; orders were sent to the commanders of the right and centre to hold their troops in hand to move upon the enemy at a moment's warning; then the two Generals waited, watching the day as it slowly dawned beyond the belt of woods.

It was ushered in with a low continuous thunder, in the direction of Stonebridge; and above the tree-tops rose those clouds of snowy smoke which mark the field of battle.

What was the origin of that menacing cloud, which shone against the blue sky, lit by the first beams of day?

The reply is easy.

During the entire night, General McDowell had been moving. Leaving behind him at Centreville a rear-guard of fifteen or twenty thousand men, he had pushed his main body forward, over a narrow and almost unknown road, through the sombre depths of the

“Big Forest,” emerged from its shadow, and was now hastening forward to deliver the gigantic blow which his active brain had planned in his tent at Centreville.

His plan was excellent: while Hunter and Heintzelmen, with their strong divisions, pushed for Sudley ford, beyond the Confederate left, strong bodies were to take position opposite Stonebridge, Red House, and other fords, with orders to divert the attention of Beauregard by heavy demonstrations, as though designing there to pass the stream. Under cover of these feints, the column of Hunter was to cross at Sudley; sweep down, clearing in succession every ford; the forces opposite were then to pass over—thus a body of about forty thousand men would be concentrated at sunrise on the southern bank of Bull Run, directly upon Beauregard’s left flank.

Then the game would be as good as won. The Confederates were scattered all along the stream over a distance of eight miles, and several hours would be required to concentrate a sufficient body near Stonebridge. But before that could be done, the issue would be decided. Falling like lightning upon the southern flank, General Hunter had it in his power to drive all before him: Beauregard must hastily evacuate his works, and fall back on Manassas; then a battle of two against one—the one retreating rapidly, the two hotly pursuing.

Such was Hunter’s plan, and it seemed at daylight sure of success. His column pushed on steadily; passed Bull Run and the little Catharpin; moved on, without pausing; and at half-past eight was almost within sight of the Confederate left.

What was that left ?

The reply will sound ludicrous. It was eleven hundred men, and four smooth-bore six-pounders.

One thing, it is true, counted. The infantry were Alabamians, Mississippians, and Georgians, commanded by such men as Wheat. The artillery were Virginians, commanded by that *brave*, Gray Latham. The whole was led by Evans, that veritable grizzly bear, with the shaggy beard, and the flashing eyes, who was to inflict upon the enemy, three months from this day, the bloody disaster of Ball's Bluff.

He was opposite Stonebridge, and the Federal force across the stream had duly made the demonstrations ordered, both with infantry and artillery. A swarm of sharpshooters had made repeated feints to cross, firing rapidly as they did so ; and the rattle of these popguns, mingled with the roar of the Federal artillery, completely diverted Evans' attention from the thunderbolt about to fall upon his rear, from the direction of Sudley.

It was nearly nine o'clock before that approaching fate sent its long, warning shadow on before, to his position near the bridge. Then the whole extent of the mortal peril menacing him, became obvious. A mounted man came at a thundering gallop to announce that a great host of the enemy were closing in upon his rear to crush his little force like an egg-shell.

Evans acted as he always did—like the heart of oak he was. Taking eight hundred of his eleven hundred infantry, and two of his four six-pounders, he hurried to the scene of danger, and at a point on the

Sudley-Brentsville road, west of the Stone House, struck full against the front of Hunter.

A single glance revealed the whole extent of the danger. Directly before the eight-hundred men and two guns of Evans, were the sixteen thousand men of Hunter, with seven companies of cavalry, and twenty-four pieces of artillery. Opposite Red House ford, the force of General Keyes was about to cross; that at Stonebridge was closing in; more than thirty thousand men would soon be opposed to less than one thousand; but it was necessary to meet and arrest them, or die.

No other course was left. Beauregard must have time to concentrate his forces near Stonebridge; a new line of battle must be formed; time must be purchased with blood. The little force of Southerners went forward to the struggle as the three hundred of Leonidas took post between the walls of Thermopylæ.

The war was fruitful in heroic deeds but it offers no braver spectacle than this. Hope must have veiled her face for that handful—the grave yawned before them. There was no possibility of victory for them. How could that atom arrest for a single instant the mighty machine rolling on to crush it?

A commander of weak nerves might have asked himself that question. It never occurred to Evans. He placed his six-pounders on the hill in his rear; drew up his men; and received with the obstinacy of a bull dog the furious assault of the enemy.

It was the Second Rhode Island Infantry, supported by six thirteen-pound rifles, which led the charge; and

opposed to them were the men of the Fourth Alabama. The lines delivered their volleys almost breast to breast, and in an instant the field was one great cloud of smoke, from which rose cheers, yells, groans, mingled with thunder.

From that moment the conflict became one of enormous bitterness, and the Federal forces fought with a gallantry which achieved the best results. Evans fought like a tiger, but his thin line was almost annihilated by the concentrated fire of the Federal musketry and cannon. Wheat fell, and was borne from the field; all around Evans, raging like a wild boar, his men were falling. Step by step, he was forced back, torn and bleeding.

Still the thought of retreat did not occur to him. It was necessary to fight until reinforcements came, holding that precious ground. If he could not hold it, then it was necessary to die. Blood was dear, but time was beyond all estimate.

Soon the moment came, however, when all was plainly over—when a handful of Southerners only remained and the conflict was no longer possible. The enemy pressed on with cheers. Evans was forced back, fighting desperately at every step—when all at once the expected reinforcements came. Descending rapidly from the Henry House hill in his rear were seen the four thousand men of Bee and Bartow—and reaching the field, General Bee took command: formed line of battle, and threw himself like an athlete against the victorious enemy. The conflict which followed was a war of giants. Bee had under him, besides Evans' remnant, four regiments and four

guns — to this the enemy opposed eight brigades and their great force of cavalry and artillery. But now more than ever it was necessary to hold that ground, for Beauregard was moving, and Bee was the one of ten thousand for the work before him.

From the moment of his arrival the thunders of battle redoubled. It was a trained and full-armed gladiator, however small of stature, which threw himself against the Federal Goliah; and the conflict was of great ferocity.

“I salute the Eighth Georgia with my hat off,” said Beauregard, afterwards, as the bleeding survivors passed him. “History shall never forget you!”

But with Bee, as with Evans, the moment of fate was to come. The force before him was too ponderous. No blows against it told. The hammer was shattered by the anvil.

By main force of merciless fusilades, and storms of shell and canister, the Southern lines were, man by man, swept to perdition. The ground was drenched in blood; the air was a sulphur-cloud; the thin line staggered to and fro, having bid farewell to hope. Then an incident as ludicrous as tragic came to finish all. From Red House ford the brigades of Sherman were seen pressing forward to envelope the right flank of the main band of Southerners. It was a giant closing his huge hand upon a fly — a sledgehammer raised to crush an insect. In thirty minutes Bee saw that his brigade would be annihilated: and with bitterness of heart he gave the order to retire toward the high ground in his rear.

At the word, the gray line fell back, fighting still, but

in disorder, and with little spirit. The men were brave — never were soldiers braver than those Georgians, Alabamians and Mississippians — but hope had deserted them; and only the trained troops of many battles fight when every chance of victory has disappeared.

Bee saw with unutterable anguish that the retreat was every instant threatening to become a panic-stricken flight. But he could not check it. In vain did he ride, sword in hand, through the fire which swept his lines, beseeching the men to fall back in good order, and not fly. His voice was unheard, or his orders unheeded. The merciless volleys from the Federal infantry tore all to pieces; the hurricane of canister swept, as with the besom of destruction, the whole field over which the men were scattering, mere fugitives.

It was at this instant — when Bee was mastered by a sort of fury of despair, and his men in hopeless rout — that the glitter of bayonets was seen beyond the Henry House hill. Plunging the spurs into his horse, Bee went to meet them, and found himself face to face with a soldier in an old gray coat, riding a bay horse. A yellow cadet cap drooped above the forehead of this personage. Under its rim a pair of dark eyes glittered.

Bee, covered with dust and sweat, his horse foaming, his drawn sword in his hand, stopped suddenly in front of the silent man.

“General, they are beating us back!” he groaned.

And he pointed with his sword to the blue masses



which were pressing his disordered troops, with that continuous and mortal fire.

Jackson looked in the direction indicated. Not a feature moved. Then his eye flashed; a slight color came to his cheek, and he said, in his calm, brief voice:

“Sir, we will give them the bayonet.”

There are words which, however quietly uttered, ring in the ears of men like the blast of a bugle. These of Jackson rang thus in the ears of Bee. Without reply he wheeled his horse, went back at a gallop to his broken lines, and pointing with his sword to Jackson, shouted:

“Look! there is Jackson standing like a stone wall! Let us determine to die here, and we will conquer!”

His men thrilled at these noble words, vibrating in the air above them like the sound of a clarion; shouts answered them; the lines were partially restored; and once more holding in his strong, brave grasp, that battered and splintered, but sharp and tempered weapon, his brigade, Bee took position on the right of Jackson, halting and facing the great masses pressing on to crush him.

Then was witnessed a spectacle which made the pulses throb. It was that presented by the six hundred men of Hampton, meeting front to front, on the Warrenton road, the whole division of Keyes, and driving it back. The stubborn blood of a race of thorough-breds fought that day in the veins of Wade Hampton, as it fought thereafter upon many memorable fields.

There are men whose characters, like their faces,

“dare you to forget.” Such a man was Hampton, nor will the South forget him.

But the moment came for him, as it had come for Evans; as it had come for Bee. Flanked on the left, his line swept by a furious fire of artillery posted near the Old Stone House, Hampton was compelled to fall back in order to escape annihilation; he did so; took position on the right, like Bee—then Jackson, with his two thousand six hundred and eleven muskets, moved forward, slow, unshaken, silent as some approaching fate.

In twenty minutes he had formed line of battle under the eastern crest of the Henry House hill. In front of his men, lying down to escape the storm sweeping over them, the figure of the Virginian was seen riding to and fro, his lips repeating calmly, “Steady, boys! steady, all’s well!” In front of his line two guns, which he had just posted there, were steadily firing.

That moment was the turning point of the battle of Manassas. Had the enemy advanced, they would have swept the hill, and snatched victory; for nearly thirty thousand infantry, and about thirty pieces of artillery, besides a regiment of cavalry, were there, right in front of less than five thousand Southerners.

They did not attack in force for more than an hour. Then the Southern lines were ready.

Johnston and Beauregard—the latter directing operations under the former, his superior—had determined to fight the decisive battle here. Why? From one of those fatalities which prove to men what puppets in the hands of Providence they are.

The officer sent to order the right and centre to move upon the enemy's rear at Centreville, had failed to deliver the order, or had delivered it too late. The right, under Ewell, moved; the centre, under Bonham, remained in the trenches. Thus the golden moment passed—the hand upon the dial of destiny points to “too late.” Johnston and Beauregard went on their foaming horses in the direction of Stonebridge.

There the opposing lines were about to grapple in a mortal struggle. The fate of a continent seemed about to be decided upon the slope of the Henry House hill, amid those clumps of pines and green cornfields above which hovered the lurid cloud of battle. Thunder, lightning, and tempest, seemed to have reached their utmost fury there. In the midst of smoke, dust, and uproar—the diabolical bass of artillery, and the crashing treble of musketry—the blue and gray lines were about to rush together like two wild animals drunk with blood, and bent on tearing each other to peices.

Johnston was and is, and ever will be, a brave soldier—a fighter, no less than a general. He seized the colours of the Fourth Alabama, shouted to the men to follow him, and plunged with that deadly burden into the gulf of battle. The men followed him with wild cheers, and the Alabamians were good, from that instant, for a conflict as desperate as the first.

Beauregard was galloping up and down the lines, with his drawn sword in his hand. In his black eyes burned the hard-fighting Creole blood; his sallow cheeks were flushed—at that moment, as he darted to and fro, calling on the troops to die in defence of their

homes and altars, it was one of the great Marshals of the Empire rallying the Old Guard of Napoleon.

In thirty minutes the broken and disheartened lines of Bee and Evans were as firm as a rock again. Hampton was by them, cool and composed as ever; on the left were some companies which had hastened from below—and in the centre was Jackson, a stone wall backed by a steel hedge of bayonets.

Hitherto, the writer of this page has stated facts, in regard to which there is no controversy. They are not only history, but accepted history. What followed the arrival of Johnston and Beauregard is reported diversely. The latter officer reports that Jackson charged twice, being driven in the first charge, from the hill. Johnston, Hampton, Pendleton, and Jackson himself, state that he charged but once, and was never driven from the hill. We follow Johnston, Hampton, Pendleton, and Jackson.

This latter won on this occasion his soubriquet of "Stonewall"—he also won the enthusiastic admiration of his men. Wounded in the hand, he wrapped it in a handkerchief, and forgot it. Surrounded by hurry and excitement, he remained as cool as ice.

"General!" exclaimed an officer, "I think the day is going against us!"

Jackson looked sidewise at the speaker. Then, in his curt voice, he replied:

"If you think so, sir, you had better say nothing about it."

Riding slowly up and down, he waited—unconscious wholly, it seemed, of the terrible fire amid which he moved. He had ordered his four regiments

to remain lying down, in line of battle, behind the guns, until the enemy arrived within about seventy-five yards of them, when they were to rise, and "charge with the bayonet."

Soon the moment came. The Federal forces had swept on, gained the plateau of the Henry House, and now their rear was seen to close up; their masses were rapidly formed for the charge. The great swarm seemed to concentrate; the blue lines presented a front, broad, deep, and terrible, with its bristling bayonets; then, all at once, with redoubled thunders of musketry and cannon, they were hurled against the thin Confederate front.

The assault was met with the bayonet. Rising suddenly from the pines, the Virginians, under Jackson, fired a volley, and rushed up the slope. With shouts, cheers, mad yells, the blue and gray lines clashed, fighting desperately for the possession of the plateau.

In ten minutes the Southerners had swept the Federal forces back, and gained it. Then the question was — could they hold it? — and one of the bloodiest conflicts, of a war as bloody as any in history, took place on the slope of that hill.

Jackson did not flinch. It was a veritable stone wall which he presented to his foes, but a wall that still advanced, step by step, as inexorable as destiny.

On his right and left some of the bravest gentlemen of the South were fighting, falling, and dying. One — a boy, and a private — exclaimed, as they carried him expiring from the field:

"They've done for me now, but my father's there

yet! — our army's there yet! — and liberty's there yet!"

Hampton, charging with his legion, near the Henry House, was shot, and fell.

Bee fell, struck down at the head of his troops, grasping the sword which South Carolina had presented to him.

Bartow, who had said, "I shall go into that fight with a determination never to leave the field alive, but in victory," was shot through the heart while leading the Seventh Georgia, and died exclaiming:

"They've killed me, but never give up the field!"

But, in spite of the fall of their leaders, the troops pressed on. Jackson had rooted himself firmly in the soil of the plateau, and now, as the right and left wings closed up, and preserved his flanks from danger, he made his great advance. In the midst of the hurricane, which had now reached its wildest intensity, he dressed his line, placed himself in front, and fell, like a thunderbolt, upon the Federal centre.

An instant decided all. The centre was pierced; the two wings of the United States army separated; and as Jackson's brigade, supported, shoulder to shoulder, by the South Carolinians of Hampton, the North Carolinians of Fisher, the Georgians, Alabamians, Mississippians, and other troops, rolled forward, like a wave of iron, and pressed the Federal right, centre, and left, the troops of General McDowell were thrown into disorder; then they gave way; then they broke; then were seen flying, with the shouting Confederates pursuing them.

The Federal commander formed a new line of bat-

tle, in the shape of a crescent, extending along the ridge in rear of the Old Stone House; but his men had lost heart.

Just as another advance had begun the brave Gen. Kirby Smith arrived with seventeen hundred fresh troops—these were thrown into action—fell on the enemy's right—and the long, hard conflict soon terminated.

The Federal army, which had advanced that morning in all the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war, was no longer anything but a mass of fugitives; and, sitting his horse upon the battle-field, General Stonewall Jackson said:

“Give me ten thousand men, and I will be in Washington to-night!”

Such was Manassas—the first great fight of the civil war. I have endeavored to describe the struggle with the fairness of truth itself, not with rancour or bitterness. Alas! grief supplants hatred when I think of that battle; for the night of the action fell dark as a funeral pall upon the corpses of more than one friend whom I dearly loved, and still mourn.

I have described the battle. I would not like to undertake a description of the retreat—of that tragic spectacle of human beings mastered by a frightful panic—of masses torn by shot and bursting shell—of men rolling, crushed beneath the wheels of their own artillery—of others throwing away guns, knapsacks, oilcloths, swords, hats, coats, every object which was calculated to impede their flight to the sheltering ramparts of Washington.

Let others elaborate that sombre and terrible picture; the present writer declines the lugubrious task.

It is enough to say here that, on the evening of the 21st of July, 1861, the "Grand Army" of the United States was in hopeless rout. Its pride was all broken; its flowers had disappeared before the sythe of death; it was as the unripe fruit which fades before the summer.

We shall meet hereafter with battles as desperate, and more bloody, but with none which possess the dramatic interest of this one.

It was the death-wrestle of two great races, and one fell, it seemed, never to rise again. But that hope was vain. The fallen grew stronger—the conquerer weaker.

At Gettysburg, in July, 1863, the mighty gladiators seemed of nearly equal strength.

At Petersburg, in the spring of 1865, the world saw that the victor at Manassas, Fredericksburg, Cold Harbor, Chancellorsville, was tottering, feeble, faint.

It was not until the 9th of April, at Appomattox Court House, that the explanation of this phenomenon was given.

The Southern army was not conquered; it was starving to death.



## II.

### PORT REPUBLIC.

THERE was in Virginia in 1862 an old officer of the French army who had followed Napoleon throughout his greatest campaigns, and was a very enthusiastic admirer of the Emperor. When the intelligence of Jackson's victory at Port Republic came, Col. ——— exclaimed:

“He is the greatest of all soldiers! There never was a greater campaign than the campaign of the Valley. I will not say that Jackson imitated Napoleon, but, if he had lived before the Emperor, I would say that Napoleon imitated Jackson!”

The object of this paper is to describe the action, the intelligence of which aroused the military enthusiasm of the old French officer.

To perform this task conscientiously and accurately, it is necessary to begin at the beginning. The marches of Jackson were even more remarkable than his battles — the huge strides of the Colossus more interesting even than the blows which he dealt. He aimed to conquer an enemy rather by sweat than blood — and Port Republic was only the last scene of the last act in a drama which was from the first scene movement, movement, movement!

In March of this year, 1862, Jackson was at Winchester with four thousand men, with orders to hold the Valley.

One morning the enemy advanced upon him with about forty thousand men—that is, ten to one; and, when his friends said, sadly, “Good-bye, General,” he did not take the hands held out, and replied:

“No! I will never leave Winchester without a fight—never! never!”

Four hours afterwards he was retreating, but only in obedience to a peremptory order from Richmond.

“Is everything removed, Major?” he said to his chief quartermaster.

“Nearly everything, General.”

“Take your time, Major; I am in no hurry to leave Winchester.”

Retreating slowly up the Valley, he had reached Mount Jackson, when Ashby sent him word that the enemy were moving their forces from Winchester toward Fredricksburg to reinforce McClellan on the Chickahominy. At the intelligence Jackson put his column in motion, and hastened with his “foot cavalry” toward the Potomac. Fifty miles were passed over with the speed of horse. The enemy, eleven thousand in number, were found at Kernstown; and, although the three thousand men of Jackson were so much exhausted that they staggered when their feet were placed upon the rolling stones of the turnpike, their commander gave the order to attack.

The battle of Kernstown followed—the struggle of two thousand seven hundred and forty-two men to drive about eight thousand from the field. That fight

was one of the hardest of the war. Jackson said that the firing was more rapid and continuous than during any portion of the battle of Manassas.

The action commenced at four o'clock on a bleak March evening, with the wind sobbing over the great fields of broom-straw, soon to be dabbled in blood. Until nightfall it raged with enormous bitterness. Time after time the Federal flag went down, and a Northern officer afterwards declared that the obstinate stand made by a single Federal regiment "alone saved them."

But at dark Jackson was beaten. The enemy were enveloping both his flanks, and driving his centre. Ashby at that moment sent him word that if he could only hold his ground ten minutes longer, the Federal forces would retire. "I know this to be so," said Ashby; he had captured, it is said, a courier of Gen. Shields', bearing the order. But it was too late. The battle was lost. Jackson's men were retreating—sullenly, doggedly, "without panic," as even the Federal commander said in his report—but they were retreating.

Having moved back three or four miles, Jackson lay down in a fence corner, slept for an hour or more, and at daylight commenced his retreat—unpursued, almost. The enemy followed him no further than Strasburg, from which point they fell back to Winchester, barricading the road in their rear.

About the middle of April Jackson was in camp, near Mount Jackson, when he received intelligence that the enemy were advancing, in heavy force. Soon their advance guard struck his front, under Ashby.

The Confederate commander was too weak to fight the heavy force under Banks, and slowly moved across the Shenandoah toward Swift Run Gap, through which ran the road to Richmond. Ashby had remained behind, and it was in endeavoring to destroy the bridge over the Shenandoah on this occasion, that his historic white horse received the historic death-wound.

Meanwhile, Jackson had reached his fastness in the Blue Ridge, and it was evident that he had not the least intention of retreating further. Like the Scottish chieftain, his back was against the rock, and he did not mean to fly.

Gen. Banks advanced no further than Harrisonburg. From that place he sent, on the 24th of April, a dispatch to Washington, announcing that "the rebel Jackson" had abandoned the Valley, and was then in full retreat upon Richmond.

The commentary upon this statement was amusing. Jackson moved rapidly to Staunton, advanced thence to the western mountains, struck and defeated Milroy, who was coming to join Banks, drove him from McDowell to Franklin, and then, having drawn up his army, and returned thanks to God for the victory, while the enemy were still firing, returned by rapid marches to the Valley. Gen. Banks had fallen back to Strasburg, where he was fortifying. Such had been the result of Jackson's "retreat upon Richmond."

No time was lost by the Virginian. He summoned Ewell to meet him at Newmarket; from that point crossed the Shenandoah and the Massanutton, advanced down the Luray Valley, and, before the enemy were aware of his presence, made a furious assault upon

their outpost, at Front Royal — that is to say, precisely on the flank of General Banks at Strasburg.

The Federal force at Front Royal disappeared, as though swept away by the wind, and Jackson pushed on rapidly to strike the Valley turnpike, between Strasburg and Winchester, full in the enemy's rear. He struck their column moving back in haste upon Winchester. At the sudden thunder of his artillery, the long columns of cavalry broke and vanished like phantoms in the woods; the trains and artillery ran off at a gallop, and the tail of the long snake, cut off from the rest, retreated rapidly upon Strasburg, whence it escaped to the mountains.

Jackson now hastened on, without pausing for a moment, toward Winchester. Moving steadily all night, and driving before him every Federal force which barred the way, he came within sight of Winchester at dawn, and, an hour afterwards, made a resolute attack. General Banks had assembled all his available forces there, and occupied the high hill to the west of the town; but Jackson knew that no real resistance would await him from troops thus demoralized. He formed his line of battle, sent word to Ewell, on the Front Royal road, to close in, and the two columns rushed, right and left, upon the town, meeting, and driving everything before them.

The blue lines were utterly broken, in full retreat, and were hastening out at the northern end of the town while Jackson's men were entering the southern suburbs.

The scene which followed will long be remembered by those who witnessed it. Men, women, and children

flocked into the streets, shouting, laughing, and waving their handkerchiefs; and such was the enthusiasm of the young girls to welcome their gray defenders, that men had to be sent forward to motion them out of the way, in order that the platoons might deliver their fire.

"Thank God, we are free! Thank God, we are free once more!" resounded upon every side, and Jackson exhibited an emotion which he had never been known to display before. He caught his cap from his head, waved it in the air, and he, the sedate, serious Stonewall Jackson — cheered! But the ovation did not divert him from his work. He rode on rapidly through the town, and followed so closely, ahead of his own column, the footsteps of the enemy, that a staff officer said:

"Don't you think you are exposing yourself to danger, General?"

To this caution he paid not the least attention. His brief reply was:

"Tell the troops to press right on to the Potomac!"

But the infantry was broken down, and the cavalry was not in place. This fact alone saved the Federal forces from capture. They reached Martinsburg, rapidly passed the Potomac, and General Banks said, in his report of these events, "It is seldom that a river crossing of such magnitude is achieved with greater success, and there were never more grateful hearts, in the same number of men, than when, at mid-day on the 26th, we stood on the opposite shore."

At Winchester, Jackson captured great quantities of stores; but the work was not done, and the time for rest was still far distant. The enemy retained possess-

ion of Harper's Ferry, and toward that point the old Stonewall Brigade, under that brave spirit, Winder, was promptly sent.

Winder advanced to Charlestown, and, at the first roar of his guns, the enemy there retreated, pursued by the Southerners to Halltown. Jackson arrived on the following morning with his main body, advanced straight upon Harper's Ferry, and was about to attack, when intelligence reached him which communicated a very unexpected and most disagreeable aspect to affairs.

A few words will explain. The advance of the formidable athlete toward the Potomac had excited the utmost consternation in Washington. The daring of the man was so well known that the Federal authorities trembled for the fate of their capital. The wildest rumors were everywhere prevalent. "Where is Jackson?" "Has he taken Washington?" These and a hundred similar questions were asked; at least, the northern journals said so. The government certainly shared this anxiety. President Lincoln had already written a hurried dispatch to General McDowell, at Fredericksburg, in which he said: "You are instructed, laying aside for the present the movement on Richmond, to put twenty thousand men in motion at once for the Shenandoah, to capture the forces of Jackson and Ewell." The Federal Secretary of War now telegraphed to the Governor of Massachusetts: "Send all the troops forward that you can, immediately. Banks completely routed. Intelligence from various quarters leaves no doubt that the enemy in great force are advancing on Washington. You will please organize and forward immediately all the volunteer and

militia force in your State." Similar dispatches are said to have been sent to the other States—*ex uno disce omnes*.

The "great force" at Jackson's command was at this time about fifteen thousand men. This he stated to Col. Boteler of his staff.

"What will you do if the enemy cut you off, General?" asked the Colonel.

"I will fall back upon Maryland for reinforcements," was the cool response.

*Credo quia absurdum est.* Jackson believed in many things which other Generals thought absurd until he accomplished them.

The intelligence which came to Jackson, now at Harper's Ferry, was enough to try his nerves. The heavy column sent up by General McDowell from Fredericksburg was at Front Royal, and had captured the Confederate force there. The advance was hastening toward Strasburg; and, as if this were not enough, Gen. Fremont, with an army estimated at twenty thousand men, was hurrying to the same point, Strasburg, from the West—had reached the town of Wardensville across the mountain.

Thus a force of about forty thousand or fifty thousand men was closing in rapidly upon Jackson's rear at Strasburg. If the columns under Shields and Fremont made a junction there before his arrival—"good-night to Marmion!" Fifteen thousand resolute men could accomplish much, but they could scarcely cut their way through fifty thousand. The great point, therefore, was to reach the village of Strasburg before the enemy. Then the little army would be safe.



Jackson began to move without delay.

“I will return again shortly, and as certainly as now,” he said, in his brief, calm voice, to the women and children of Winchester, when he left them. Then he rode on, and rejoined his column. The captured stores, and the prisoners, some three thousand in number, were rapidly sent forward; the army followed; it was a race between the Confederate commander and his adversaries which would arrive first. The stake was not an unimportant one—it was nothing less than Jackson’s army.

Hastening forward, Jackson reached Strasburg just as Fremont’s advance force came in sight; the column under Shields was yet some miles distant. Unfortunately, the old Stonewall Brigade had been left behind at Harper’s Ferry; until it arrived, no one who knew the character of Jackson for a moment believed that he would continue his march.

He halted, and waited. Fremont pressed on, intent upon his prey; soon his advance force was in sight of Strasburg, and came on rapidly in line of battle.

“Ewell, attack!” was Jackson’s order, as at the second Manassass his brief words were, “Ewell, advance!”

Ewell attacked, as that hardy soldier always did, with vigor. The head of Fremont’s column was driven back upon the main body. Ewell pressed forward; the long rattle of his musketry echoed from the mountain side, and that echo reached the ears and stirred the pulses of a little column of foot-sore and weary men, who were hastening on to join their commander.

It was the Stonewall Brigade, now only an hour or

two's march away. At the sound of Ewell's guns the worn-out men pressed on more rapidly. All knew that their fate depended upon the speed of that march. An hour gained meant safety—an hour lost meant capture and destruction.

At Middletown, Winder, then commanding the Brigade, saw motionless on the turnpike the long lines of Ashby's cavalry. That stout cavalier never yet deserted comrade; at the sight of Winder the brown eyes flashed.

"I never felt so much relieved in my life!" exclaimed Ashby, grasping his friend's hand. "I was certain you would be cut off, and had made up my mind to join you, and advise you to force your way through Ashby's Gap at Gordonsville!" \*

Ewell was still fighting obstinately when bayonets were seen to glitter in the direction of Winchester; a red flag flashed in the sunshine; steadily the weary column came—the old Brigade was safe "at home" with its commander.

As it entered the town, Jackson ordered Ewell to fall back. Then the army moved; Ashby's cavalry retired, the last, from Strasburg; as they disappeared, the enemy rushed in to seize their prey.

That prey had escaped. The lion was out of the meshes.

The army moved on steadily, Ashby holding the rear, and drawing blood with his teeth when they pressed him too closely. Thus pushing before it the long train of captured stores, and the blue line of

\* I have this incident from my friend, Captain McHenry Howard, formerly of Winder's staff.

prisoners, the column ascended the Valley; Newmarket was reached and passed; the Shenandoah crossed; Harrisonburg attained. If Jackson could now strike across to Port Republic—a little village in the forks of the Shenandoah—he could send off his captures through Brown's Gap to Richmond, place his back against the mountain, and strike a mortal blow either at Fremont in his front, or at Shields, advancing up the Luray Valley, on his flank.

Without delay, the formidable "game" continued to press forward to the harbor of refuge.

On the morning of the 6th of June, Jackson's column was moving steadily across to Port Republic—Fremont pressing closely on the rear, and Shields, as the signal-flags on the mountain announced, hastening up to cut off the army at Brown's Gap.

Jackson did not hurry. Those who saw him will testify that he never was more calm.

Ashby brought up the rear, fighting over every foot of the ground, with splendid gallantry.

On this day he ambushed and captured Col. Percy Wyndham; three hours afterwards the chevalier, "without reproach of fear," was dead.

Just at sunset, as the woodlands slept in the dreamy light of one of the most beautiful afternoons of June, he had rushed forward at the head of a small force to assail the Pennsylvania "Bucktails," under Col. Kane; the ranks had closed in, in a bitter struggle; Ashby's horse was shot; he sprung to his feet; but as he was waving his sword—as "Virginians, charge!" came from his lips—a bullet pierced his breast. He expired almost immediately, but not before the enemy

was driven,—and his body was brought out before a cavalryman.

The brave Col. Kane, who had been captured, was told of it.

“I am sorry,” he said ; “he was a noble fellow !”

It was an enemy who said that ; but Ashby did not need the praise of friend or foe. His brief career was like a dream of chivalry ; but to-day his name and fame are cut upon a tablet warmer and more durable than “monumental alabaster.”

That tablet is the great heart of Virginia.

From this moment commenced that series of superb manoeuvres, which culminated in the excellently fought battle of Port Republic.

To understand the “situation,” it is absolutely necessary to look at the map. Fremont was at Harrisonburg ; Shields at Conrad’s Store, in the Luray Valley ; Jackson at Port Republic. These three points are nearly the angles of an equilateral triangle,—the sides ten or fifteen miles in length.

Jackson had twelve thousand men ; Shields about the same ; Fremont about twenty thousand, according to the records captured by Gen. Ewell. It must have been near that.

If Fremont joined Shields, or Shields joined Fremont, a column of about thirty-two thousand troops would thus be opposed to twelve thousand. If he joined him—but that had been provided against. Jackson had destroyed the bridge at Conrad’s Store, as he had destroyed that near Newmarket. Trying a second time to cross, Shields found the swollen current directly in his path. No junction was possible

—Jackson, crouching like a tiger at Port Republic, could spring either on Fremont or Shields, according to his fancy.

It will soon be seen that he intended to crush them before they could unite—to tear to pieces Shields, and then attack and destroy Fremont, or be destroyed by him. It might have been thought that the great gladiator was tired of retreating—that the spirit of “fight” flushed his pulses. Those near him at that moment saw an expression upon his face, which is best described by the word “dangerous.”

A moment of great personal peril to the commander was to precede the hour of danger for his command. The incident about to be related is curious.

Jackson’s main body reached the Shenandoah, opposite Port Republic, on the night of June 7th. The General sent some cavalry in the direction of Shields, and then established his head-quarters in the town.

On the next morning he had just mounted his horse, when the cavalry came back panic-stricken, pursued by Federal horse and artillery, one piece of which galloped up, and unlimbered at the bridge.

Jackson was cut off from his army. That bridge was his only means of return to his forces, and it was commanded by the muzzle of a piece of artillery, loaded and ready. The General acted with rapidity. Riding straight toward the gun he called out,

“Who ordered you to post that gun there? Bring it here!”

Who could give such an order but a Federal officer of rank? The gun was quickly limbered up—began

to move to the place directed—and Jackson with his staff spurred rapidly across the bridge.

The ruse was discovered too late by the artillery officer—Captain Robinson, of Portsmouth, Ohio. He fired three shots at the fugitives, but they screamed above them. Jackson continued his way, and, passing rapidly through the camps, with his cap in his hand, exclaimed:

“Beat the long roll!”

It was beaten; the troops sprung to arms; Taliaferros' brigade rushed straight to the bridge, and in fifteen minutes the Federal artillery was captured, their cavalry in full flight.

The Confederates were still pursuing them, when a low, continuous thunder—sullen and ominous—was heard in the direction of Harrisburg. Ewell was fighting Fremont at Cross Keys. The hardy Virginian, at the head of his five thousand bayonets, had thrown himself impetuously against the twenty thousand of the enemy, at the spot where the “Cross Keys Tavern” used to stand, about midway between Port Republic and Harrisonburg.

Cross Keys was one of the “neatest” fights of the war. It may be said of the soldier who commanded the Southerners there, that he thought that “war meant *fight*, and that fight meant *kill*.” He threw forward his right—drove the enemy half a mile—brought up his left—was about to push forward, when, just at nightfall, Jackson sent him an order to withdraw with the main body of his command to Port Republic.

Ewell obeyed, and put his column in motion, leav-

ing only a small force to observe the enemy. He was the last to leave the field, and was seen helping the wounded to mount upon horseback. To those too badly hurt to be moved from the ground, he gave money for their necessities out of his own pocket.

Health to you, General! wherever you may be. A heart of steel beat in your breast in old days; but at Cross Keys the groans of the wounded melted it.

What Jackson intended on this night of June 8th, is known from the memoir of an officer. Col. Patten, left to command the small force in Fremont's front, went at midnight to ascertain Jackson's exact instructions.

"Hold your position as well as you can," was his order; "then fall back when obliged; take a new position, and hold it in the same way, and I'll be back to join you in the morning. By the blessing of Providence, I hope to be back by ten o'clock."

That is to say, before ten o'clock Shields would be crushed, and Jackson designed returning to assail Fremont.

That enormous will had determined upon everything—the mathematical brain had mapped out, in advance, the whole series of manœuvres. I have said above that at this time Jackson was perfectly calm and composed. A singular proof of that statement will now be given, and, perhaps, some readers may find it supports the strange theory, held by not a few of his men, that Jackson was mentally "inspired."\*

\* This incident is given upon the authority of Captain Howard of Baltimore. It has never before been published.

At one o'clock in the day, during the fight at Cross Keys, he rode up and dismounted from his horse near the bridge at Port Republic, "unusually absorbed, but perfectly tranquil."

"Major," he said, turning with the sweet smile of a child to an officer near, "would it not be a glorious thing if God would give us a great victory to-day?"

Two hours passed slowly; the cannonade from Cross Keys became, if anything, more violent. The remainder of the scene shall be described in the words of the brave officer who furnishes the memoir:

"Great was my astonishment," says Captain Howard's MS., "when, after a long silence, the General called abruptly, 'Pendleton! write a note to General Ewell—say the enemy are defeated at all points, and to press them with cavalry, or, if necessary, with Wheat's battalion and artillery.' What could have led him to such a conclusion, I was, and still am, utterly unable to imagine, for my knowledge was certain that he had received no other dispatches from the field, and in the hearing of all of us, the noise of conflict was at least as loud and as near as ever; besides, Jackson would have been one of the last to draw any inference from the latter sign, for, as he told me once before himself, he was 'deaf in one ear, and could not well distinguish the direction of sounds.' Captain Pendleton, however, without remark, wrote the order, or whatever it might be termed, to Gen. Ewell, and, as he placed the sheet of paper against my horse's shoulder for a writing desk, I saw that he used almost exactly Jackson's words. With no little expectation, I awaited the result, and, accordingly, in about half an hour, and



near the time that the courier must have reached the battle-field, the cannonade began to slacken, and presently arrived a dispatch from Gen. Ewell stating, not, indeed, that the enemy were routed so as to be pursued, but that they were repulsed at all points."

Observe that Captain Howard states that "Jackson returned from the direction of Cross Keys about one o'clock, and dismounted from his horse near the bridge." In the second place, "I remained near his side for at least two hours, during which time only couriers came from the battle-field,"—and at this time, that is, at *three o'clock*, Jackson sent his singular order.

In February, 1864, the writer of this wrote to Gen. Ewell on the subject of Cross Keys, and received a detailed and interesting memoir of the action.

"About 11, A. M.," says Gen. Ewell, "the enemy advanced on my front, driving in the Fifteenth Alabama. Their batteries were mostly opposite mine, near the church, and the artillery engagement began *about noon*. After firing some time, the enemy advanced a brigade against Trimble's position," and Trimble attacked, drove them, advanced, and reached a point "more than a mile" beyond his first position. By the least calculation that firing, which lasted "some time," after noon, and this hard attack, will bring the hour to *three*. Thus the enemy were really "defeated at all points," as Jackson stated when he sent his curious order.

"I did not push my success at once, because I had no cavalry," says Ewell in his report.

“Press them with cavalry,” said Jackson in his singular dispatch, sent from the bridge at Port Republic.

Who will undertake to explain this very curious incident?

The day of Port Republic dawned. It was the 9th of June, 1862.

Two days before, Gen. McClellen had written to Washington: “I shall be in perfect readiness to move forward and take Richmond the moment McCall reaches here, and the ground will admit the passage of artillery.”

Jackson was to “have his say” in that.

At nightfall on the 8th this was the situation of affairs. Fremont had been repulsed, and was held in check at Cross Keys; Shields was rapidly advancing up the Luray Valley, and had almost come in sight of Port Republic; Jackson had concentrated his main body on the east side of the Shenandoah, and was ready to attack.

At sunrise he moved forward the Old Stonewall Brigade in front, and soon the dropping fire of skirmishers announced that his advance had struck the enemy.

It was a “day of days,” and no more beautiful spot could have been selected in all that land of lands, Virginia, for a decisive struggle. The sun which rose over Austerlitz was not more brilliant than this one whose rosy beams lit up the fields of golden wheat, the shining river, and the forests, echoing with the songs of birds. Those who died that day were to fix their last looks on a sky of cloudless blue—to fall asleep amid the murmur of limpid waves.

Gen. Shields had selected an admirable position for his line. His right rested on the river, bending here in the shape of a crescent; thence the line extended across a field of wheat to a rising ground at the foot of Cole mountain, a spur of the Blue Ridge; there his left flank was protected by the acclivity, and strengthened by artillery.

If Jackson attacked the enemy's right flank, the river stopped him. If he attacked their left, the steep side of the mountain, crowned with artillery, met him. If he assailed the centre, to the infantry fire from the front would be added the terrible enfilade fire of the guns upon the heights.

Any other general would have paused, reconnoitered and perhaps retired. Jackson advanced and attacked. His plans required an assault, and he assaulted.

The sun had scarcely risen above the shaggy summit of the Blue Ridge, when the *Sic Semper* banner of Virginia was seen bending forward, rippling as it moved; the rattle of musketry resounded; cheers echoed from the mountain side; and the Virginians of the Old Brigade threw themselves upon the foe whom they had so often encountered.

In thirty minutes they were hurled back, torn, bleeding, and leaving behind them, dead or dying, some of the best men of the command. The enemy had met them with veritable *feu d'enfer*. From the Federal infantry in front had issued rolling volleys of musketry — this they could stand; but from the acclivity to the right came a fire of shell, round shot, and canister, so furious that no troops could face it. The field was swept as by the besom of destruction. The

veterans of the Stonewall Brigade, who had faced unmoved, the thunders of Manassas, Kernstown, McDowell, and Winchester, recoiled from this terrific fire; and with the Seventh Louisiana Regiment, under the daring Harry Hays, fell back in disorder.

The repulse seemed decisive. The Federal troops rushed forward with wild cheers, the Star-spangled Banner fluttering in the wind. Winder's guns went off at a gallop to escape the danger to which they were exposed; and although two Virginia regiments were thrown forward, and fought obstinately, the enemy still advanced. The earth was littered with dead bodies in gray coats. A gun of was overturned, and had to be abandoned. The enemy rushed on, cheering and delivering volleys as they came. At that moment the battle of Port Republic was lost.

Jackson sat his horse, looking on with that grim flash of the eye, which in him boded no good to his opponents. The stern "fighting jaw" was locked; the cheeks glowed.

A rapid glance revealed all. It was not the fire of the infantry in front that stopped the troops. They had met that fire often, and were more than a match for it. It was the murderous enfilade fire of shell and canister which swept the field from the heights on the right, tearing them to pieces whenever they essayed to advance. In face of that fire, the bravest veterans were unwilling to move forward. "Why do so?" they may have said; "Jackson is coming; the day is before us; he will find some way to stop that fire."

Such was probably the reasoning of the troops; at least it was correct. A single glance showed Jackson

that the key of the position was the hill crowned with artillery. As long as these swept the field, he was paralyzed; and every moment counted. Beside the foe in his front, there was another more dangerous — Fremont and his fifteen or twenty thousand men at Cross Keys. In front of Fremont was only a “corporal’s guard” of infantry; he heard the thunder of the fight beyond Port Republic; he knew that Shields was heavily engaged with Jackson, — at all risks he would come to his succour. Then once united, the Federal force would number about thirty thousand men, against Jackson’s force of ten or twelve thousand. It was easier to charge the artillery, drive the enemy, and gain a victory, when that enemy numbered only twelve thousand, than when he numbered thirty thousand.

Nothing remained but the charge. If those guns continued to pour their fire on the Confederate flank, the battle was lost — retreat through Brown’s Gap the only course left. Jackson looked at the artillery vomiting shell and canister more furiously than before. Gen. Taylor was near him — his brigade had just arrived.

“Can you take that battery, General? It must be taken!” said Jackson, briefly.

Taylor’s sword flashed from the scabbard, his face glowed. Wheeling his horse, he galloped back, without a word, to his men, and, rising in his stirrups, shouted, pointing with his sword to the Federal artillery:

“Louisianians! can you take that battery?”

Wild cheers replied, and, reaching at a bound the

head of his column, Taylor ordered a charge upon the guns.

They were four Louisiana regiments, one from Virginia, and Wheat's battalion of "Tigers." As they moved, loud cheers from the Federal lines on their left resounded — there the enemy was driving everything before him. They pressed on. The ground they moved over was terrible — steep, rugged, tangled, almost impassable. But this did not stop them. Up the rough ascent, through the undergrowth, scattering, but reforming quickly, they continued to advance.

Soon they reached a wood, beyond which a narrow valley of open ground only, intervened between them and the Federal artillery. From the left rose a roar of triumph more ferocious than the first; it was the Federal right wing driving Jackson's line before it.

An echo to that shout comes back from the mountain. It is the cheer of the Louisianians as they emerge from cover, sweep down the hill, and, crossing the valley, rush headlong toward the muzzles of the Federal artillery.

The charge is magnificent. There will be only one more as desperate — that of Pickett's Virginians on the last day of Gettysburg. As they rush up the hill, the Federal batteries direct upon them their most fatal thunders. Shell, round shot, and grape strike them in the face; the ranks are torn asunder; and where a line but now advanced, are seen only dead bodies, without legs, without arms, without heads, with breasts torn open, the whole lying still, or weltering in pools of blood. The Louisianians have dashed into the mouths of the cannon; had their bodies torn to pieces; and

are dead or dying. Hays, De Choiseul, and one hundred and fifty-eight out of three hundred and eight men of the Seventh Louisiana have fallen. The other regiments tell the same story. The command is shattered; but enough men are left to mount the slope, seize the guns, and bury their bayonets in the breasts of the cannoneers as they fly. The Federal infantry supports recoil like the artillerists; the cannon are taken; Taylor holds the crest, every foot of which he has bought with blood.

But he is not to retain it. A fresh brigade advances upon his weary handful; a determined charge is made; the Louisianians are driven back by weight of numbers, and the enemy recapture the guns. But they have hard metal to deal with. No hammer stroke seems to break or even weaken it. The Louisianians again advance before the guns can be turned on them; make a furious countercharge, and the second time the guns are taken by them.

Three times the Federal artillery was thus lost and won, in spite of the most desperate fighting. All honor to courage wherever it displays itself, under the blue coat or under the gray; and the Federal forces fought that day with a gallantry that was superb. They died where they stood, like brave men and true soldiers—an enemy records that, and salutes them.

Taylor's charge won the day of Port Republic. That battle belongs to Louisiana, and she has a right to be proud of it. To meet the heavy assault thus directed against his left, Gen. Shields was forced to send thither a large body of fresh troops. These were taken from

his centre and right — thus Jackson's left and centre were relieved.

The Federal guns had swept the field — Taylor had silenced them. The Federal infantry had concentrated in the centre — Taylor drew it off. That was the result of the great charge.

Jackson saw all at a glance. The moment for the great blow had arrived. The enemy were moving to their left; that enabled him to move to his right.

Then the gray masses were seen hastening toward the mountain, as though driven by the wind. Winder's old brigade formed in serried phalanx; his batteries redoubled their thunders. Connor rushed to the relief of Taylor, who, thus reinforced, turned like a tiger upon his foes. From that instant the battle was a wild, furious, insensate grapple. The mountain gorges thundered; the musketry rolled through the woods in one sustained and deafening crash. Under this resolute and unshrinking advance the Federal lines began perceptibly to hesitate and waver.

Hesitation in the decisive hour of battle is destruction. That last charge broke the army of Gen. Shields to pieces. Struck in front by the musket fire, and torn in flank by the artillery, the Federal lines gave way; the Confederates rushed upon them — in ten minutes the battle-field presented the tragic spectacle of one army flying in disorder before another pressing on with cheers of triumph.

Fremont had been only checked; Shields was routed. His forces were pursued by infantry, artillery, and cavalry, until they disappeared beyond a bend of the river, and Jackson was master of the country.



“I never saw so many dead in such a small space in all my life before,” he said, as he rode over the field; but never was blood shed to more advantage.

It was while Jackson was riding thus slowly across the ground, that a roar came suddenly from the opposite bank of the river. Then shell began to whistle—and these shell burst right in the midst of the ambulances full of wounded, and the parties engaged in burying the Federal as well as Confederate dead. Mr. Cameron, chaplain of the First Maryland, was reading the burial service when a cannon ball tore through the group, and the bearers dropped the dead. Now, whence came that fire, so opposed, one would say, to the usages of war?

It came from Gen. Fremont. Unable to cross the river, as Jackson had burned the bridge, and forced thus to witness the defeat of his Lieutenant before his very face, he vented his wrath upon the victor by that firing.

That roar was a grim sound, but not so grim as the frown of Jackson.

“While the forces of Shields,” he wrote afterwards, “were in full retreat, and our troops in pursuit, Fremont appeared on the opposite bank of the Shenandoah with his army, and opened his artillery on our ambulances and parties engaged in the humane labors of attending to our dead and wounded, and *the dead and wounded of the enemy.*”

Jackson makes no comment; let us imitate him, or nearly.

It was natural, perhaps, that Gen. Fremont should fire at gray uniforms; but did he know that those

gray-clad soldiers were burying his own dead? Those were *Federal* dead we were burying, as well as Confederate; *Federal* souls were prayed for as well as others. It was a harsh interruption, that fire upon the dead men in blue uniforms, and it was a pity. They were brave—never men fought better.

A few paragraphs will terminate this sketch of a memorable battle.

Port Republic is a landmark. It sums up one epoch—after it, the war entered upon a new phase—invasion. It may be objected that Cold Harbor terminated this first epoch; but the reply is, that Port Republic decided Cold Harbor. From the moment when Jackson crushed the Federal column operating in the Valley, Gen. Lee could concentrate the entire force in Virginia, in front of McClellan, and that concentration, as events showed, meant victory.

Thus Port Republic was not only the successful termination of a rapid, shifting, and arduous campaign—it was, besides this, one of those peculiar contests which act upon events around them, as the keystone acts upon the arch. With Jackson beaten here, Richmond, humanly speaking, was lost, and with it Virginia. With Jackson victorious, Richmond and Virginia were saved, for McClellan was repulsed, and the Southern Cross moved northward to invade in turn the territory of the enemy.

It is seen to have been a hard fight. At Manassas, Cold Harbor, Cedar Run, the second Manassas, Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Spottsylvania, and Petersburg, the Confederate forces

were more or less outnumbered. At Port Republic, Jackson fought nearly man to man—and victory was long doubtful. At one time the battle was lost; it was only gained at last by the fire, force, rush, and dogged obstinacy of the *élite* of the Southern troops resolved to conquer or die.

“Through God’s blessing,” Jackson wrote in his despatch, “the enemy near Port Republic was this day routed, with the loss of six pieces of his artillery.”

That phrase, “through God’s blessing,” probably indicated more in the silent soldier than in others. At the moment when his lines were reeling, an unseen Hand had seemed to support him, an invisible Power to fight for him. And he had triumphed.

On the morning of the 10th of June, Jackson was as free as the wind to move whithersoever he willed. Shields was beaten; Fremont retreating—the splendid prize of the Virginia Valley, for which the opponents had been playing, had fallen to the lot of Jackson. “What would he do with it?” What were his plans?

Six days afterwards a cavalier entered the little village of Mount Crawford, on the valley turnpike, about midnight. In the middle of the street, deserted at that hour by all citizens, a solitary figure on horseback was awaiting the new comer—Col. Munford, commanding the cavalry. He had received that day a note from Jackson, directing him to “meet him at eleven that night at the head of the street at Mount Crawford, and not to ask for him or anybody.”

Jackson was punctually at the rendezvous, as has

been seen ; Col. Munford arrived, and they now conversed for some time in low tones. When they parted, the Colonel had received his instructions, and returned to Harrisonburg.

Let us follow the Colonel. At his head-quarters were a number of Federal surgeons, with ambulances, come to carry off Fremont's wounded. To their request Colonel Munford replied that he must first send to Jackson for instructions, and a messenger was sent at once. He speedily returned, and in the hearing of the Federal surgeons, through a wooden partition, reported :

"Gen. Jackson told me to tell you, Colonel, that the wounded Yankees are not to be taken away, and the surgeons are to be sent back with the message that *he* can take care of their wounded men in his hospitals. He is coming right on himself, with heavy reinforcements. Whiting's division is up, and Hood's is coming. The whole road from here to Staunton is perfectly lined with troops, and so crowded that I could hardly ride along."

The Federal surgeons overheard every word of this, and when Col. Munford summoned them in and informed them simply that Jackson would care for their wounded, they said no more. On the same day they returned to Gen. Fremont. On the next, the whole Federal army fell back to Strasburg, and began to entrench against the anticipated attack.

Colonel Munford had successfully carried out the order of the solitary horseman at Mount Crawford : "Produce upon the enemy the impression that I am going to advance."

While Fremont was fortifying at Strasburg, Jackson was crossing the Blue Ridge to throw himself against the right wing of Gen. McClellan in the Chickahominy.

### III.

#### SEVEN PINES AND THE SEVEN DAYS.

ON the left bank of the Chickahominy, about two miles from New Bridge, stands, in the midst of bleak and melancholy fields, a lofty, rugged, and solitary oak, riven by cannon balls.

At about two o'clock in the morning, between the 27th and 28th of June, 1862, two officers — one of them very illustrious, the other very obscure — had wrapped themselves in their blankets, and were falling asleep beneath this tree, when a third personage, entirely unattended, rode up, dismounted, and lying down between the weary men, began to converse.

“Yesterday was the most terrific fire of musketry I ever heard,” he said; and any one who had listened to the accents of that brief, low, abrupt voice, would have recognized it. The speaker was Stonewall Jackson; he was addressing General Stuart, and he referred to the bitter, desperate, and bloody conflict of “Cold Harbor.”

A battle which the man of Manassas, Kernstown, and Port Republic called “terrific” must be worthy of description. Let us therefore try to paint the grand and absorbing panorama which those summer days of 1862 unrolled upon the banks of the Chickahominy.

War reached its bloodiest climax there, amid the swampy fields and the tangled underwood — here was struck a blow which shook the fabric of the Federal Government. It did not overthrow it; but it made the huge mass tremble.

One month before, that is to say, at the close of May, McClellan had ascended the Peninsula; thrown his left wing across the Chickahominy; erected admirable works there — and with his army of one hundred and fifty thousand men, had rooted himself within sight of the spires of Richmond. Then commenced his slow, steady, inexorable advance. Inch by inch, foot by foot, he began to traverse the four or five miles which separated him from the “doomed city.” It was a siege commenced at the distance of five miles, as Grant’s was afterwards commenced at the distance of twenty — and every day McClellan ascended his tall tree on the bank of the river to reconnoitre through his glasses the roof-tops of the city which he was thus assailing by “regular approaches.”

In the last days of May he was in excellent spirits. His dispatches will show that. His great army was in light marching order; his left was pushed to a point upon the Williamsburgh road, where seven lofty pines gave their name to the locality; thence he was on the point of springing upon the enemy in his front, when that enemy sprung upon him.

Johnston, the cool and wary soldier who had foiled his great adversary at Manassas, now took the initiative.

On the last day of May the Southern lines advanced into the swampy thicket at Seven Pines; a furious assault was made upon the enemy’s left there, and on

his right at Fair Oaks ; after one of the most obstinate and sanguinary struggles of the war, the Federal left, under General Casey, was swept from the field, shattered, paralyzed, and with "no longer any fight" in that wing of the United States Army. The enemy fought gallantly at Seven Pines. Did the "rebels" fight as bravely? Let a member of the New York Artillery, writing to the *Cincinnati Commercial* newspaper, give his evidence:

"Our shot tore their ranks wide open," says this writer, "and shattered them asunder in a manner that was frightful to witness; but they closed up at once, and came on as steadily as English veterans. When they got within four hundred yards, we closed our case shot and opened on them with canister; and such destruction I never elsewhere witnessed. At each discharge great gaps were made in their ranks — indeed whole companies went down before that murderous fire — but they closed up with an order and discipline that was awe-inspiring. . . . It was awful to see their ranks torn and shattered by every discharge of canister that we poured into their faces, but they closed up and still kept advancing right in face of the fire. At one time, three lines, one behind the other, were steadily advancing, and three of their flags were brought in range of one of our guns, shotted with canister. 'Fire!' shouted the gunner, and down went those three flags, and a gap was opened through three lines more, as if a thunderbolt had torn through them, and their dead lay in swaths. But they at once closed up, and came steadily on, never halting or wavering, right through the woods, over the fence, through the



field, right up to our guns, and sweeping everything before them, captured every piece !”

If that had been written by a Confederate, it might be doubted by some readers. But the writer was a soldier of the Federal Army—was there anything to make him say that, but a love of *truth*? He saw a charge which the Old Guard of Napoleon never surpassed, and he described what he saw, like a worthy soldier, forgetting under which flag he fought.

At nightfall on the 31st of May, the Federal left, on the south bank of the Chickahominy, was driven. It had fallen back from Seven Pines—the Confederates held the works there—a bloody if not decisive blow had been struck at Gen. McClellan’s programme.

But Johnston had been wounded by a fragment of shell, and was lying faint and pale in his house upon Church Hill, in Richmond. Who was to succeed him?

All eyes turned to a man as yet little known except in military quarters—an officer, first of the engineers, then of the cavalry—Robert E. Lee. He was then in Richmond, rode every day out to the lines; but had no command. He was now assigned to duty as commander of the Confederate forces, in place of Johnston.

The heavy and firm hand of the great Virginian was soon felt at the helm. The ship which had drifted rudderless for a moment, after the fall of Johnston, was again under command, and bore down upon the enemy’s line of battle, as Nelson’s flag ship did at Trafalgar.

The moment called for action, action, action! Important events were taking place in every part of the

country, and Jackson was conducting to a triumphant issue the great campaign of the Valley.

On the day after the battle of Seven Pines, "Old Stonewall," as the country now began to call him, passed between the converging columns of Fremont and Shields at Strasburg; struck them with his right hand and his left, and retreated with his prisoners and spoils toward the Upper Valley, where nine days afterward he was to fight the battles of Cross Keys and Port Republic, and remain the master of the situation.

Lee had scarcely taken command when the intelligence of the victory at Port Republic came to him, borne on the breeze of the mountains. Fremont was paralyzed, which was as good as routed; Jackson was free to move wherever he was ordered; now was the time for a great blow at McClellan, and the arm was raised.

Before it fell, it was necessary to discover whether an opening existed in the enemy's coat of mail, through which the point of the weapon could pierce him. On his left, below Seven Pines, to which locality he had again advanced, the armor was perfect. Frowning works behind bristling abattis rose everywhere, and it was determined to assail, if possible, the Federal right beyond the Chickahominy. An important point was still, however, to be decided. Had Gen. McClellan fortified his right wing as he had fortified his left? Was he ready on the north bank as on the south of the stream? To determine this point, Stuart was sent with fifteen hundred horsemen to make a reconnoissance.

Stuart—that model cavalier with the keen-edged

sabre, the floating plume, and the soul that never, when the hour was darkest, bated one jot or tittle of the heart of hope—Stuart set out one night about the middle of June, at moonrise, struck for Old Church, beyond the Federal right; ascertained that they had no defences in that quarter; drove their cavalry before him; made the circuit of McClellan's army, not intending to surrender, but, if intercepted, to "die game;" crossed the Chickahominy far below; and made his re-entrance into the Confederate lines just as the Federal forces rushed upon him.

"He has gone in at the back door," said Col. Rush, of the Federal Lancers, on returning from the pursuit. "I saw his rear-guard as it passed the swamp."

But the information was the important thing, whether brought in at the back-door or the front. Stuart rode thirty miles to Richmond on the night of his entry into Charles City, below Malvern Hill, and before daylight Gen. Lee and the authorities knew that the Federal right beyond Mechanicsville was undefended.

From that moment the best plan of assault was obvious. In front at Seven Pines, the enemy were posted behind works, so heavy and complete, that the best troops in the world would have recoiled from them, or dashed themselves to pieces, without hope. On the left were defences almost as strong, and to reach them—even to arrive within range of the long rows of cannon—it was necessary first to wade through the frightful ooze of White Oak Swamp. Thus both these approaches, in front and on the Federal left, were impracticable. The right remained, and that right was now known to be open, undefended; here was the

veritable hole in the cuirasse through which the Confederate sword's point could reach the Federal heart.

The hand to grasp that weapon must be trusty, the eye to direct the blow, clear and sure. The firm and daring hand of Jackson was best of all suited for the work; and the issue of affairs at Port Republic had left him free as the wind to move wherever he was needed.

He was beyond the Blue Ridge, but it is certain that in spirit he was on the Chickahominy. He knew what was demanded of him, and as though obeying a voice which called him, hastened, in the language of his men, to "strip for a fight." Then the order came, and at once he began to move.

The column crossed the Blue Ridge and headed toward the lowland. The soldiers had ceased to ask any questions. In a general order, Jackson had forbidden all discussion of his movements; enjoined upon the troops not even to inquire the names of the villages through which they passed, and to reply, "I don't know," to any question. The order was obeyed. Seeing a man climb a fence to pull some cherries:

"Where are you going?" asked Jackson.

"I don't know," was the reply.

"To what command do you belong?"

"I don't know."

"Well, what State are you from?"

"I don't know."

A dry smile flitted across the tanned face under the sun-scorched cadet cap, and the man in the dingy gray uniform rode on. His entire command had become veritable "Know-Nothings."

That result was more important than it may appear. The great point was that deserters should have little to communicate, even if they knew where to find the enemy, and that Gen. McClellan should be the greatest Know-Nothing of all. The plan succeeded. In Washington and on the Chickahominy there was utter ignorance of Jackson's whereabouts. The secret was as closely guarded in the Confederate army.

On the night of the 26th of June, Gen. Stuart handed to the present writer a dispatch for delivery to a confidential emissary before daylight. It was directed simply, "Gen. T. J. Jackson, Somewhere." Ashland, within sixteen miles of Richmond, was this "Somewhere." Jackson had reached that point, and his heavy arm was already raised to strike. Gen. McClellan, meanwhile, was smoking his cigar, and looking at the spire of St. Paul's Church in Richmond, where he probably expected soon to hear the prayer for the President of the United States.

There were many who would doubtless have been glad to have seen that edifice, and all others in the "doomed city," blown to atoms with gunpowder. This soldier and gentleman had no such desire or intention. At West Point he had learned war, not rapine.

From this rapid summary of the "situation," the reader will be able to form a just estimate of the relative positions which the two great adversaries, Lee and McClellan, occupied toward each other, on the night of the 26th of June, 1862.

On both sides of the Chickahominy, the fields of Henrico, Hanover, and New Kent, were dark with the swarm of Federal soldiers, in their bright blue uni-

forms. The burnished bayonets glittered amid the half-destroyed woods—artillery rumbled across the desolated fields—every dwelling-house was overrun—the whole face of the earth had become one huge, dirty camp. The very owls and whippoorwills had disappeared in the tangled depths of the swamp—the venomous moccasins of the ooze had been frightened into their holes by the tramp, the roll, and the thunder of moving columns of infantry, cavalry, and artillery.

The army numbered one hundred and fifty thousand men, one hundred and twelve thousand effective for the field—see the Federal reports—and this great engine, Gen. McClellan was about to hurl against Lee, whose force numbered about sixty thousand, when “contrabands” hastened in, and announced that he himself was to be attacked; that the dreaded Stonewall Jackson was on his flank, ready to assail him. At noon on the 26th of June, he wrote to Washington:

“I have just heard that our advanced cavalry pickets on the left bank of the Chickahominy, are being driven in. It is probably Jackson’s advance guard.”

Two hours and a half afterwards he was sure of the fact.

“Jackson is driving in my pickets, etc., on the other side of the Chickahominy.”

An hour afterwards, A. P. Hill had crossed the stream at Meadow Bridge, nearly north of Richmond; had hastened forward to Mechanicsville, and then thrown himself like a tiger against the Federal works, which he carried at the point of the bayonet. The bridge being thus uncovered, Longstreet and D. H. Hill crossed—the enemy were again assailed at Bea-

ver Dam—at daylight on the morning of the 27th, Jackson swept around their right, and leaving the ground behind them encumbered with burning stores, they fell back rapidly to the formidable position behind Powhite Creek.

Lee's excellent plan of battle was thus in progress of execution. It was simple, as all great things are. While Magruder remained in front of Seven Pines, that is to say, the Federal centre opposite Richmond, with orders to hold his position at all hazards, and to the last, the remainder of the army was to cross at Meadow Bridge and Mechanicsville, and sweep down the left branch of the stream in echelon of divisions, the left in advance.

From left to right the line would be, Jackson — D. H. Hill — A. P. Hill — Longstreet; Longstreet to make a heavy feint on the river's bank; the two Hills to protect his flank and the centre; Jackson to move around, and coming in upon their right, compel them to abandon their strong works, come out into the open fields, and either fight there, or retreat toward the White House—that is, their bread and meat.

Let the reader glance at the map. Without a map, all descriptions of military movements are, as Hamlet says, but "words, words, words!" Pushing through the fields and forests of Hanover, Jackson was to gain ground toward the Pamunkey; reach out his ponderous arm beyond Cold Harbor; envelope the enemy's position on Powhite Creek; and crush them in his grasp. If they drew back and eluded him, so much the better. In open fight, he would dash them to

pieces, which was cheaper than a mortal grapple with them behind the breastworks.

Such was the order of battle conceived and mapped out, in its minutest details, by the clear brain of the great soldier at the head of the Confederate Army. What Lee had thus matured in his tent, was translated into action in the field, with little modification. Longstreet and A. P. Hill threw their columns against the enemy near Gaines' Mill, and closed in, in a hand to hand struggle; nearly the whole Federal Army was discovered there in front of these two divisions, and Jackson, advancing grimly, steadily, like a coming Fate, to his appointed work of getting in the enemy's rear, was now recalled, and ordered to concentrate his entire force near the Old Cold Harbor House, and attack.

He obeyed. The roar of artillery there doubtless drew him; for under that calm exterior was the in-born spirit of "fight" which characterizes the lion or the tiger. At the word, he changed his line of march, half faced to the right; and at five in the afternoon swept forward to the arena upon which the mighty adversaries had grappled in a mortal embrace.

He did not come too soon. Let us see what had happened, but look first at the topography of the country. The character of the ground in battles often saves or destroys. A swamp involves the fate of five thousand men; a mile of open field in front of works crowned with cannon, means ten thousand corpses. In the battle of Cold Harbor neither the swamp nor the open ground was wanting, and it was the assailing



force which suffered from these features of the terrain.

The writer of this page had been familiar with this locality from his youth. He thought he knew it well before the war; but, after June 27, 1862, he felt he had nothing more to learn.

Fancy a rolling country of fields, woods, water-courses; and, along the margins of these water-courses, swamps overgrown with brushwood, flags, and marsh-grass—an actual jungle. You place the foot on firm earth apparently,—it sinks. You step upon a prostrate log,—it turns. You try to advance,—ooze, slush, brambles, and “jungle” are before you.

Through this swampy undergrowth, the haunt of the owl, the whippoorwill, and the moccasin, the men of Jackson, Hill, and Hood, charged triple lines of Federal breastworks.

Where the swamp ended, the slopes appeared,—slopes bare of trees, and swept from one end to the other, as a broom sweeps a floor, by the shell or canister of artillery posted on the crests.

Across these slopes, the Confederate lines advanced to storm the defences of Gen. McClellan.

Near Gaines' Mill, and a little lower down, the ground often rises into abrupt ridges, flanked by deep ravines, which afford a fatal advantage to sharpshooters.

It was upon a ridge of this description, behind Powhite Creek,—that is to say, behind open slope, swampy undergrowth, and sheltering ravine,—that McClellan had erected his triple tiers of earthworks,

defended by abattis, crammed with infantry, and bristling with cannon.

Behind this impenetrable armor the great Federal gladiator awaited the assault of the opponent, whose skill and courage no one knew better than himself.

The assault began between the hours of two and three on a cloudless day of June,—one of those afternoons when the face of nature seems to be wrapped in calm repose, and the very birds appear to slumber. The dying on that day were, at least, to see the blue sky bending over them, and the sunlight glittering on the woods and streams as they passed away.

A. P. Hill, pressing forward to the two or three cabins called New Cold Harbor, threw himself upon the Federal forces posted near that place, and soon the battle began to rage with fury.

The style of the late "war correspondents" in the journals will not be adopted by the present writer, here or elsewhere. It is easy to pile up adjectives, and invent the curious phenomena of "iron hail," "leaden storms," "tempests of projectiles," and "hurricanes of canister, mowing down whole ranks." Battle is a stern, not a poetical affair; the genius of conflict a huge, dirty, bloody, and very hideous figure,—not a melodramatic actor, spouting a part. Smoke, uproar, blood, groans, cheers, and the cries of the dying enter into war; but these are as small a portion of the real subject as the "iron hail," or the "leaden storms." Lee's plans, and the manner in which his lieutenants carried them out, are more rational subjects of interest than the roar of the artillery, or the groans of the wounded.

Hill charged the enemy's breastworks, swept over the first and second lines, reached the third on the summit of the ridge, stormed that, too, with the bayonet,—from the heights above the woods resounded the Confederate cheers of victory.

They were not uttered a second time; the men who uttered them were at the next moment either driven back into the ravine, or had passed to eternity. The enemy had made a vigorous charge, regained their works, and, advancing in their turn, drove the little force of Hill, about eight thousand men, steadily back upon New Cold Harbor.

The struggle now became more desperate and bloody than before. Hill was a true heart of oak; no human soul was ever braver than this slender Virginian, in his plain uniform, his old slouch hat, and with his amiable smile. He never shrunk to the end of the drama any more than there in the first act—peace to that brave!

For an hour after the successful assault upon the Federal works, Hill continued to hold his ground near New Cold Harbor, in spite of determined attacks, and heavy loss; but then it became evident that succor must be sent him, or he would be swept away. With him Lee's centre would disappear; his wings would be divided; then good-bye to Longstreet—perhaps to Jackson.

Lee acted with decision. Longstreet was ordered to make a feint against the Federal left, upon the high ridge in his front, and this he proceeded to do, with that steady vigor which procured for him from Lee the name of "The Old War-horse." His men ad-

vanced in face of a destructive fire of artillery from the front, and the Federal guns beyond the stream; the feint was made, and the enemy did not move. Then Longstreet, as always, assumed the responsibility of acting according to his judgment, when a new phase was presented by events. He turned the feint into an attack; his men threw themselves with obstinate courage against the enemy's works, and the battle began to rage more furiously than ever.

For more than another hour Longstreet and Hill held their ground in front of McClellan, receiving the attack of a force amounting to about seventy thousand. The two divisions opposed to this force numbered about thirty thousand. Add the fact that the seventy thousand were behind works, the Confederates in open field, and the proportion will be really four to one.

The one fought the four until nearly five o'clock, dying where they fell, torn to pieces by artillery, or riddled with musketry, without a murmur. Men never fought better, or died more bravely. The two commands were slowly being destroyed—it was merely a question of time—but they did not shrink or avoid the work.

It was at this moment, when every heart began to face the conviction that defeat and death awaited them, that the long roll of musketry and the thunder of artillery resounded from the woods in the direction of Old Cold Harbor house. At that sound every heart throbbed, every face flushed. Fierce cheers ran along the decimated lines of Hill and the regiments of Longstreet, holding their ground obstinately. "Jackson! Jackson!" rose in a shout so wild and triumphant,

that it rolled across the woods, and reached the ears of the Federal army.

It was truly Jackson who arrived—the *Deus ex machina*—and General Lee, who had awaited that welcome sound, spurred forward and met his great associate.

The spectacle was interesting—the contrast between the two illustrious soldiers very striking. Jackson was riding a raw-boned sorrel, with his knees drawn up by the short stirrups, his eyes peering out from beneath the low rim of his faded cap; there was absolutely nothing about him, save the dingy stars on his collar, to indicate his rank. Lee, on the contrary, was clad in a neat uniform, with decorations—rode an excellent and carefully-groomed horse, and every detail of his person, every movement of the erect and graceful figure of the most stately cavalier in the Southern army, revealed his elevated character, the consciousness of command, a species of moral and “official” grandeur both, which it was impossible to mistake. The Almighty had made both these human beings truly great; to only one of them had He given the additional grace of looking great.

“Ah, General!” said Lee, grasping Jackson’s hand, “I am very glad to see you; I had hoped to have been with you before.”

Jackson saluted, and returned the pressure of that hand, of whose owner he said, “He is a phenomenon; he is the only man I would follow blindfold!”

Gen. Lee then looked with anxiety in the direction of the firing on the left.

“That fire is very heavy,” he said, in his deep voice; “do you think your men can stand it, General?”

Jackson turned his head quickly, listened for an instant, and then replied in the curt tones so familiar to all who knew him:

“They can stand almost anything, General. They can stand *that*!”

Ten minutes after uttering these words, Jackson saluted his commander, put spur to his raw-boned horse, and went at full speed to rejoin his corps, which in his own words, had “closed in upon the front and rear of the enemy, and was pressing forward.”

Lee remained at the centre. There he was ready to deliver his great blow.

It came without delay, and was struck at the heart. Recoiling from the heavy pressure of Jackson on his right, McClellan threw that wing of his army a little to the rear, to avoid being flanked, and then, concentrating his best troops upon the commanding ridge, near McGhee’s house, received the Confederate assault with sullen courage.

That assault was resolute, desperate, of unfaltering obstinacy. To carry the formidable position which the Federal forces occupied, the heaviest fighting was a necessity; this ponderous obstacle could only be removed by gigantic blows; the hammer might be shattered, but it must strike until it broke in the hand of him who wielded it. Closing up his lines as the regiments grew thinner, Lee presented to the enemy, at five in the evening, an unbroken front, with Longstreet clinging, with teeth and claws, to the ground on the right, A. P. Hill’s decimated division fighting in the

centre, and Jackson sweeping forward through the woods and swamps upon the left.

From this moment the interest of the battle of Cold Harbor concentrates upon the movements of Jackson. Hill was worn out by his long and tremendous struggle; Longstreet was reeling under the enormous blows dealt at him; Jackson was fresh, "in full feather," and steadily advancing.

Let us pass to that portion of the field, and look at the man of Port Republic and his veterans. To see them fighting in old days was a splendid spectacle; to recall their combats is, even now, a thing to make the pulses throb.

Jackson's corps had gone in. The sinking sun was almost hidden by the lurid smoke which rose from the woods; the ears were deafened by the streaming volleys of musketry and the thunder of artillery. Jackson was riding to and fro in the fields around Cold Harbor, silent, abstracted, glancing quickly at you if you spoke to him, and sucking a lemon.

A staff officer gallops up, and salutes the plain-looking soldier.

"Gen. Hood directs me to say, General, that his line is enfiladed by a battery of thirty-pound Parrotts, which are decimating his men, and making it impossible for him to advance!"

Jackson rises in his stirrups and beckons to an officer, who hastens up, saluting.

"Go back and get fifteen or eighteen guns," he says to the latter, "attack that battery, and see that the enemy's guns are either silenced or destroyed."

The officer gallops off, and in twenty minutes a

tremendous roar is heard from the left; a furious duel between nearly fifty pieces of artillery, all apparently firing at the same moment, takes place; then the Federal fire slackens, and from the woods arise wild cheers as Hood's men charge.

Half an hour then passes. Jackson is riding to and fro, still abstracted, and sucking his lemon, when a second officer hastens up, and reports that D. H. Hill is hard pressed, and must have reinforcements.

"Where is the Stonewall Brigade?" Jackson asks, abruptly.

"Behind that hill, General," says a member of his staff, pointing to a clump of woods.

"Order it to advance to the support of General Hill."

The officer disappears at a gallop in the woods; five minutes afterwards a line of glittering bayonets emerges from the copse. Above them flutters the bullet-riddled flag.

Jackson's eye flashes at them from beneath his faded cap.

"Good!" he says, in his quick tones; "we will have good news in a few minutes now!"

The old brigade passes over the wide field, plunges into the wood in front; then a long, steady roar of musketry is heard. Hill is reinforced, and can press on.

From this time the battle is no longer a conflict of human beings, but a mortal grapple of wild beasts. An incredible bitterness seems to inspire the opponents; in spite of the desperate attack of the South-



erners, the Federal lines still hold their ground with splendid gallantry, not receding an inch.

Jackson is looking toward the front, and listening in silence to Stuart, whose cavalry is drawn up on the left, when a messenger arrives from Ewell.

“General Ewell directs me to say, sir, that the enemy do not give way in his front.”

Jackson rose in his saddle; his eye blazed; extending the hand in which he held the lemon, he replied:

“Tell Gen. Ewell, if they stand at sunset, to press them with the bayonet!”

The words were jerked from the lips, rather than spoken. They made the heart of one listener beat.

Ewell charged, Hood charged, the whole Southern Army swept forward, as though the low words of Jackson had been breathed in every ear.

In front of Hood was a tangled swamp, an almost impenetrable thicket, and a ditch apparently impassable—beyond was a high hill bristling with cannon, vomiting shell and canister. Hood rushed in front of his Texans.

“Forward! quick march!” was his order.

The line swept forward in the midst of an appalling fire, leaving the ground littered with dead and dying,—among the former was Col. Marshall, one of the best officers of the Fourth Texas.

“Close up! close up to the colors!” came from the lips of Hood.

The line closed up, broke through the swamp, cleared the ditch, and rushed up the hill, in face of the murderous fire of the Federal guns.

“Forward!” shouted Hood, “forward! charge right on them, and drive them with the bayonet!”

Bayonets were fixed, as the men rushed forward; they charged the breastworks in their path; the enemy gave way and fled; the flag of the Texans was placed upon the works which crowned the hill, and then arose a shout which made the forest ring. “Right and left,” says an eye-witness of the scene, “it was taken up and ran along the line for miles, long after many of those who had started it were in eternity.”

Hood had lost a thousand men, but he had taken fourteen pieces of artillery, a regiment of prisoners, and had won for his command the right to place upon their battle-flag the words which Jackson uttered the next day, on looking at the ground:

“The men who carried this position were soldiers indeed!”

The sun had sunk; the enemy had been “pressed with the bayonet;” the Federal army were in hopeless disorder and full retreat toward Grapevine bridge—on their way, that is, toward James River, where, under the port-holes of the Federal gunboats, was the only hope of safety.

The fields and forests of New Kent were covered with the dying and the dead; in the shadowy swamps upon which night had descended, some of the bravest gentlemen of the South were passing slowly, as their blood flowed, drop by drop, into eternity; around them were the dead fathers, brothers, sons, and husbands of Southern children, sisters, mothers, and wives—but the “Star-Spangled Banner” had gone down in the storm, and the “Red-Cross Flag” was floating still.

Two days afterwards, Gen. McClellan's disheartened forces were undergoing the horrors of that terrible retreat to the James River. They were retreating day and night, horse, foot, and guns, with the foe upon their track; but it was a retreat which will remain forever famous in history. In the Federal commander was skill, courage, the heart that does not despair. In his army was a nerve in face of defeat, and an equanimity under adverse fortune, which are prouder glories for the Federal flag than the poor repulse of Lee at Gettysburg, or the burlesque "victory" of Sheridan with his forty-five thousand over Early with his ten thousand at Opequon.

At the bridge in White Oak Swamp, McClellan sullenly confronted Jackson, and said to that King of Battle, "Halt!" And he halted.

At Frazer's Farm, the veterans of Longstreet tried to drive the Federal forces from their ground — and they failed.

At Malvern Hill, Gen. Lee made a resolute attack upon the position of McClellan; threw the *élite* of his army on the enemy's line, in charge after charge — and at night the obstinate blue lines were still unbroken; skill, courage, and obstinacy in the General and his troops had foiled the best soldier of the age. It is true that before morning, McClellan abandoned his position, and retreated to James River. But that was the movement of a good soldier. Defeated at "Cold Harbor" in a pitched battle, army against army, he had brought off his troops, repulsed every assault, cut his way through, and was saved.

Looking back now, over the wide field, through the

lurid smoke, let us try to discover what the gigantic struggle meant — what the result really was.

One glance is sufficient.

Gen. McClellan had invaded Virginia, and was within five miles of Richmond, with one hundred and fifty thousand men.

On the 25th of June, he was about to advance, and fully believed that the city would fall. On the 2d of July, he was thirty miles distant from it, seeking shelter under the gunboats on James River.

He had lost a great battle; an appalling number of his men; a large part of his artillery; thousands of small arms; twenty-five miles of country, and his head was about to fall.

To the candid observer this meant decisive defeat. It is certain that the world thought so — and the most penetrating military mind in the Southern army was in favour of prompt action, upon that theory.

One day, after Malvern Hill, while conversing with a friend in his tent, Jackson rose from his camp couch, struck the pillow with sudden violence, and exclaimed:

“Why don’t we advance? Now is the time for an advance into Pennsylvania! McClellan is paralyzed, and the Scipio Africanus policy is the best! Let the President only give me the men, and I will undertake it. Gen. Lee, I believe, would go; but perhaps he cannot. People say he is slow. Gen. Lee is *not* slow. No one knows the weight upon his heart — his great responsibilities. I have known Gen. Lee for five-and-twenty years — he is cautious; he ought to be. But he is *not* ‘slow.’ Lee is a phenomenon; he is the only man whom I would follow blindfold!”

Why was not this policy adopted? The reply to that question will be disinterred, probably, some day, from the depths of the Department of "Rebel Archives" at Washington.

A month afterwards it was seen that Jackson was right. That "erratic" individual had, as usual, arrived at the solution of the problem by "good luck" — not brains. This of course.

Pope was in Culpeper, plundering and burning; McClellan was decapitated — it was necessary to go and fight Pope's "Army of Virginia;" the battle took place; then, dragged by the current of events, the Confederate authorities advanced to Maryland.

But the golden moment had passed away. In July, the Scipio Africanus policy was the best — in September it was the worst. The soldier who had retreated before Lee from Cold Harbor, again appeared in his front, joined battle at Sharpsburg, and Lee was compelled to retreat in turn.

In the fall of 1864, the present writer revisited the country around Cold Harbor, and looked with interest upon the localities where the gigantic struggle had taken place in June, 1862. After that time, he had not again seen the ground, not even when the wave of war bore him thither in June, 1864; for then Gen. Grant had taken a fancy to the neighborhood, and his heavy earthworks barred the way.

In that autumn preceding the downfall of the Confederacy, the appearance of the battle-field was bleak, sombre, and had a dolorous effect upon the feelings. There was the old Cold Harbor House, torn and dismantled, near which "the gallant Pelham" had

been greeted by Jackson as he came back from his guns—where was Pelham?

There was the knoll where Jackson and Stuart rode between the guns at nightfall; there was the solitary oak, torn now by cannon balls, under which they had conversed that night—where were Jackson and Stuart?

Dead—Pelham at Kelly's ford; Jackson at Chancellorsville; Stuart at Yellow Tavern.

These immortals, whose hands I had touched, whose voices I had listened to, whose smile had greeted me, had gone down in the bloody gulf of battle, to appear no more; but their eyes still shone, their words still resounded, their figures still moved amid the bleak and melancholy fields around Cold Harbor.

They were there on the 27th of June, 1862—and are there forever!

## IV.

### THE SECOND MANASSAS.

*"This week is the crisis of our fate."*

Does the reader remember when and by whom these words were written?

If they greet his eyes for the first time to-day, and his sympathies be anti-Southern, he will say, perhaps:

"Johnston or Beauregard wrote thus from Bull Run in July, 1861 — Jackson from Port Republic in June, 1862 — or Lee from Gettysburg in 1863."

On the contrary, it was McClellan, who penned that brief and pithy dispatch from Alexandria on the 1st day of September, 1862, when the disorganized battalions of Maj. Gen. Pope were hastening towards the protecting defences of Washington.

To-day the world knows that his fears were well founded. Never had the day looked darker for the Federal cause than then. Never had the overthrow of the Confederacy seemed so hopeless. Worse still — a great and real danger menaced the Federal seat of government. The authorities trembled in their bureaux; each moment they expected to see the red battle-flag of Lee upon the Arlington hills, each instant to hear the tramp of his legions under the walls of the Capitol.

Throughout the three preceding days they had heard the long, continuous roar of cannon from the fields of Prince William. Every hour great parties of stragglers had made their appearance opposite Chain Bridge. Every moment, almost, until the wires no longer worked, depressing telegrams had come from the army of Gen. Pope, and each one was more disheartening than the last. All knew that a great battle had been fought again on the bleak plains dotted with pine-trees, opposite the weird Stone Bridge; that the fields of Manassas, already crowded with dead, had become the charnel house of other thousands—that the shadows there had deepened, the spot become trebly cursed again by blood and destruction. The result of that three days' roar of cannon and rattle of musketry was the pithy telegram which is given above:

“This week is the crisis of our fate.”

Now, what were the events which rolled the great wave of battle once more to the shores of Bull Run, adding a new and more tragic interest to the sombre hills and ravines of this historic spot? The fifth act of a tragedy is badly understood without a knowledge of the acts which precede it. In rapidly tracing these, time will not be lost, nor is it the amusement of the reader which we aim at. The truth of the Virginia campaigns has been buried beneath great tomes full of falsehood—beneath enormous party pamphlets like the “Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War,” where every grain of wheat is hidden by a bushel of chaff—where, consequently, it is chiefly chaff on which the reader feeds. Chaff is not a whole-



some diet. To those who prefer the wheat of truth, these sketches are addressed.

What had occurred in that month of August, 1862, was this:

Defeated before Richmond, Gen. McClellan had drawn upon his devoted head the thunder and lightning of the Federal displeasure. The world said that the hapless issue there, resulted from the generalship of Lee, and the fighting qualities of his troops. Gen. Halleck said that it resulted from the incapacity of McClellan. In vain did Gen. McClellan "propose to cross James River at that point," Harrison's Landing, "*attack Petersburg, and cut off the enemy's communication by that route South,*" which plan, when Gen. Grant adopted it, was greeted with hosannahs. What was thus approved in 1864, was contemptuously scouted in 1862—McClellan suggested it, not Grant—and the record remains. Gen. Halleck "stated to him very frankly my views in regard to the danger and impracticability of the plan;"\* he was not allowed to carry out his "impracticable" scheme; more still, he was summoned to Washington, shelved there, and his forces were assigned to General Pope, then bent upon a great advance toward the Rapidan.

Gen. Pope arrived at his head-quarters in a car decked out with flags; stated, it is said, that hitherto he had seen nothing of his enemies "but their backs;" and issued an order to the army in which he said: "Let us study the probable line of retreat of our opponents, and leave our own to take care of itself. Let us look

\* Conduct of War. Part 1, 454.

before and not behind. Disaster and shame lurk in the rear."

The sequel, as the reader will perceive, was the most grotesque of commentaries on the General's military theory. It was on his "line of retreat" that Jackson struck the mortal blow at him.

Gen. Pope thus bade defiance to military science and fate, and it cannot be said that he conciliated the smiles of Providence, the All-Merciful, who watches over the helpless. Culpeper County was desolated with fire and sword. When the Federal troops retreated, it was one great waste, full of homeless and starving women and children, whose cries went up to God. But let that pass. The first blow struck by Gen. Pope was not fortunate. He delivered battle at Cedar Mountain, where, on the 9th of August, on a lovely afternoon, he was defeated by Jackson. The fight was obstinate, and the field covered with dead; but the August moon, bathing the slopes of Slaughter Mountain, saw the Southern banner floating on the battle-field, and the Federal forces hastening back toward Culpeper Court House, pursued by Jackson.

This battle, Gen. Pope said afterwards, was lost by Gen. Banks, in consequence of his disobedience of orders. That General denied the charge, and brought a "railing accusation" against Gen. Pope, of incapacity, and indisposition to venture on the field of battle. The record does not make the truth apparent, for the clearest issue of veracity is involved relating to the orders.

Cedar Run was a defeat of the Federal forces, since they retired; Jackson followed, and two days after-

wards Gen. Pope requested permission to bury his dead. But heavy Federal reserves were behind, Jackson's force was small, and he retreated behind the Rapidan.

The Federal design was now developed. They had abandoned all further efforts to take Richmond from below, and had concentrated north of the Rappahannock. Gen. Lee accordingly put his main body in motion; advanced to the Rapidan, crossed the river, and streamed forward to cut off his opponents from the Rappahannock—a movement which induced them to fall back with rapidity, and take up a position on the northern margin of the stream.

Such was the first illustration of the Federal General's theory in reference to lines of retreat. That *disaster lurked in the rear* was now to receive a proof more emphatic.

Before crossing the Rapidan, Gen. Stuart, commanding the cavalry of the Longstreet army, had met with a vexatious mishap. He had ordered one of his brigades to rendezvous at the little village of Verdiersville—had gone thither with his staff, and omitting, as usual, every precaution looking to his personal safety, had lain down on the porch of a small house in the village, where he slept unguarded even by a single vidette. The consequence was that a Federal cavalry regiment, prowling around, surprised him just at dawn; he was forced to leap on horseback and jump the fence to escape—and so hasty was this movement, the enemy being close upon him, that he left behind him his hat and cape, which they bore off in triumph, to the great disgust of the gay cavalier.

Verdierville was thus a spot where Stuart had registered a laughing oath of vengeance. He was now about to fulfill it with a "poetic justice" seldom met with outside of the covers of a romance.

Gen. Pope had retreated beyond the Rappahannock, where he thundered at every ford with his numerous artillery, and an attack in front was evidently injudicious, if not impracticable. To flank him was evidently the most judicious course, and to cut his communications would seriously cripple him. Stuart set out with his cavalry to cut them.

In the midst of night and storm, he struck the Orange railroad at Catletts; charged pell-mell into the Federal camps; threw everything into enormous confusion, and ransacked the whole place. A singular chance had directed him. Catletts was Gen. Pope's head-quarters, but he was either absent or managed to escape. He, however, left behind him his most private official papers, and his personal effects, including his uniform coat. These were borne off by Stuart and safely brought back.

The papers contained the fullest statement of Gen. Pope's forces, position, designs; his hopes, fears, all that should be guarded, under triple steel, from an adversary. If Gen. Lee had determined upon the great flank movement which followed, these papers confirmed his intention. If he had not, they decided him.

Stuart returned laughing to his quarters. On the way he met Gen. Jackson.

"Here is Pope's coat, General," he said, holding it

up ; “ if he will send me back my hat, I will send him back his coat.”

Jackson smiled, as he always did, when he heard the laughing accents of that brave voice. Then he became thoughtful again ; he was developing in his profound intellect the details of the great blow which, in obedience to the orders of Lee, he was about to deliver.

The design of Lee was more than daring, it was correct. Absurdest of the absurd is that philosophy of war which, ignorantly pointing to Cæsar and Napoleon as examples, erects audacity above science, and decries sound principles in warfare. Examine the campaigns of Lee, the greatest living soldier, and his movements everywhere will be found “ correct.” Place him where Gen. Pope then was—he would never have been flanked and cut off. Gen. Pope’s order desired the men to “ dismiss from their minds certain phrases — lines of retreat, and bases of supply.” His destruction followed.

Lee’s plan was simply to send a column of about twenty thousand men across the upper Rappahannock ; thence by a rapid march to Thoroughfare Gap ; and thence to Manassas, where Gen. Pope had established his main depot of supplies. If the column was pushed rapidly, it might arrive before Gen. Pope — Manassas would be destroyed — the Federal army starved — Lee would follow, and thus the Southern army would be concentrated on the enemy’s line of retreat — starving, faint, disheartened, they would find in their path, strongly posted to receive them, the vet-

eran bayonets of Jackson and Longstreet, held in the firm grasp of Lee.

To command the advance corps, Jackson was selected — that great “right arm” whose loss Lee lamented so bitterly after Chancellorsville. The peculiar trait of Jackson as a soldier was that he always arrived in time. Others failed often—he never did. He moved with the mathematical accuracy of a machine. If he undertook to arrive, he arrived, if not with his whole force, with a part of it. Those broken down would probably catch up — meanwhile, he attacked. For great examples, take Kernstown, McDowell, and Sharpsburg.

Jackson put his column in motion up the river, and from that moment advanced like an avenging fate — never pausing, allowing nothing to affect his fixed purpose. Before the most rapid vidette could bear the news to Gen. Pope, he had dragged his artillery across the narrow, rock-ribbed, and forgotten ford at Hinson’s; pressed on to Orleans; and was heading straight for Thoroughfare. For the time he seemed to have forgotten the existence of roads. The column moved apparently on the theory that where two men can place their feet, an army can pass. When they came to fences, they threw them down; when they met with streams, they waded. Jackson thus advanced, an eye-witness says, “across open fields, by strange country roads, and comfortable homesteads, on and on, as if he would never cease.” It was the “bee line” that he was taking. When the Confederates were marching over nearly the same ground in

June, 1863, a soldier asked an old negro where they were going.

"All right, Master," replied the old man, smiling. "You are going the same road Mas' Jackson took last year, only he took the *nigh-cuts*."

At sunset on the 25th of August, the column "moving on briskly without a straggler," was approaching Salem. Jackson sat his horse with the light of sunset on his bared forehead — for he had taken off his old cap to salute the men — and his face was lit up with a proud smile. No sound was heard but the shuffling feet of the great column, and the rolling wheels of the artillery; the men whispered, "Don't shout, boys, the Yankees will hear us;" for orders had been issued that music, cheers, shouts, should all be stopped, as they were now approaching the enemy.

Jackson had counted, nevertheless, "without his host." There was something the men could not do, and that was refrain from cheering their favorite. For a time they passed by waving their hats in silence to the bare-headed soldier. Then the stream broke through. Some one, carried away at sight of the old faded uniform, the dingy cap and the familiar face, raised a shout — with that the torrent burst forth. A roar, wild, thundering, tumultuous, reverberated across the fields and in the forests — and Jackson succumbed, for that greeting stirred his soldier-pride and conquered him.

"You see I can't stop them!" he said, turning to an officer. "Who could fail to win victory with those men?"

Strange confidence, had it not been justified by ex-

perience! "Those men" were the veriest tatterdemalions who ever, with their rags, affronted the sun! Such scarecrows had never before carried muskets, and that implement alone established their claim to the title of soldiers. It is true that their method of carrying it removed all doubts. They were faint, half-starved, weary unto death, and in rags; but they laughed, and their bayonets were bright.

It was Gen. Lee who said that there was one occasion when he was never ashamed of the appearance of his soldiers — when they were fighting.

At dawn on the 26th, after a brief rest at Salem, Jackson moved again, reached Thoroughfare Gap, passed unopposed between its pine-clad ramparts; and debouching through its eastern mouth, swooped down upon the rear of Gen. Pope.

The march had been a complete success. Stuart's cavalry had presented an impenetrable barrier to the enemy's horsemen, thus completely shielding the great movement; Jackson had arrived, next came the fighting, and the cannon soon began to roar. The plains around Manassas, silent, asleep, cursed it might have been said, through those long months since July, 1861, had started, opened affrighted eyes, and again began to groan as the dogs of war coursed backward and forward again over the fields where the foot sank into graves.

To comprehend what followed, the reader must look at the map. Many who read these lines, will probably need no such reference — having fought there.

The "situation" may be conveyed in a few words. Jackson, with twenty thousand men, was in Gen. Pope's



rear; Lee was moving rapidly to join him; Gen. Pope, warned at last of the fate which threatened him, was hastening back from the Rappahannock to extricate himself from the terrible trap in which he was nearly caught.

But his situation was by no means discouraging. While Lee, with the great reserve under Longstreet, moved over the arc of the circle, by way of Thoroughfare, the Federal commander could move over the chord, by way of the Orange railroad. He had the straight line to Manassas, that is to say, to Jackson, whose twenty thousand men he ought surely, with his large army, to be able to crush before Lee's arrival.

That result was indeed looked upon as certain, and Northern correspondents—those children of enthusiasm—wrote to their papers that the great Stonewall Jackson was at last securely hemmed in, and out-generaled, flanked, cut off, and as good as captured.

The personage thus threatened was meanwhile at work. He knew that Gen. Pope's great column would soon be hurled against him, mad with rage and anticipated triumph; and the Virginian doubtless proceeded on the hypothesis that nothing tempers rage in men, as in animals, like starvation. The destruction of the great stores at Manassas meant starvation for Gen. Pope's followers, and Jackson hastened to destroy them. Stuart rushed in with his cavalry, and an infantry detachment. The mighty mass of stores was kindled; the flames soared aloft, and that black cloud of smoke upon the horizon must have announced to Gen. Pope that his precious bread and meat, and for-

age, that is to say, the sustenance of his men and animals, were being destroyed.

What he could not do, being out-generaled, the authorities at Washington did. They sent a brigade under the brave Gen. Taylor to protect the depot; but admirably as this brigade attacked, it was driven back, pursued toward Alexandria, and the fate of Manassas was sealed. The men of Jackson swarmed in and ransacked it.

Many memoirs of that strange and grotesque scene have been written. In the midst of the burning store houses, burning cars, burning sutlers' shops, surrounded by fire, smoke, utter confusion, amid shouts, cheers, cries, laughter, the men were feasting on unheard-of delicacies, and with thirsty throats guzzling rich wines and cordials.

"'Twas a curious sight," says one, "to see our ragged and famished men helping themselves to every imaginable article of luxury or necessity, whether of clothing, food, or what not. For my part, I got a tooth-brush, a box of candles, a quantity of lobster-salad, a barrel of coffee, and other things which I forget. The scene utterly beggared description. Our men had been living on roasted corn since crossing the Rappahannock, and we had brought no wagons, so we could carry little away of the riches before us. But the men could eat one meal at least. So they were marched up, and as much of everything eatable served out as they could carry. To see a starving man eating lobster-salad, and drinking Rhine wine, barefooted and in tatters, was curious; the whole thing was indescribable."

A warlike music suddenly came to mingle itself

with the unaccustomed banquet. From the direction of Bristoe, a station on the Orange railroad, about four miles from Manassas, came the long, continuous thunder of artillery.

It was Ewell's. That commander had been sent to hold the front, while Jackson proceeded to destroy the great depot at Manassas, and he was scarcely in position when the head of Gen. Pope's advancing army struck him. It was commanded by Gen. Hooker, whom Jackson was to overwhelm at Chancellorsville.

A rough wrestle followed. Ewell threw forward three regiments, opened with artillery, and attacked so boldly that Gen. Pope seems to have believed that he had in front of him the entire Confederate force. He consequently paused, hurried forward his main body, and prepared for battle. Ewell continued to roar defiance with his artillery, and show an unmoved front. Pope advanced a heavy force; Ewell advanced to meet it; the two columns seemed about to close in, in a decisive struggle, when flames were seen to rise from the bridge over Broad Run, between the opponents, and when the smoke drifted away, Ewell had disappeared, laughing grimly, doubtless, after his fashion, at the result.

He had kept Gen. Pope off of Jackson's rear, while Manassas was burning; that point was evacuated; when Gen. Pope rushed in on the next morning, his great adversary had disappeared. Nothing greeted him but burning store houses and blackened ruins, from which a few cavalry videttes retired at his approach, disappearing in the woods.

The bread, meat, and forage of his army was a heap of ashes.

This destruction of his stores was truly unfortunate for the Federal commander; but that was not all. His enemy had vanished. Where was he? Gen. Pope had fully expected to find him at Manassas; and, on the preceding day, had written to McDowell: "If you will march promptly and rapidly at the earliest moment down upon Manassas Junction, we shall bag the whole crowd."

But "at the earliest dawn" of the 28th Jackson had disappeared, leaving Gen. Pope greatly bewildered in reference to his whereabouts. The cotemporary opinions expressed by the subordinates of that officer are not complimentary.

"All that talk about bagging Jackson," wrote Gen. Porter, "was bosh. That enormous gap, Manassas, was left open, and the enemy jumped through." "Jackson's forces," he added, "were reported to be wandering around loose, but I expect that they know what they are doing, which is more than any one here, or anywhere, knows." On the 28th, Gen. Pope is declared to have hastened toward Centreville, "not knowing at the time where was the enemy."

And that enemy ought to have been looked for *where he ought to have been*. He ought to have been where he could form a junction with Lee, then approaching Thoroughfare—that is to say, near Groveton: Thither, in fact, Jackson had moved after the destruction of Manassas, on the night of the 27th, thus escaping Gen. Pope, who rushed into the great

smouldering pandemonium during the forenoon of the 28th, only to find that the bird had flown.

Let us glance now at the situation on that August morning. Never was anything more "dramatic." Campaigns are often dull, halting, and inconsequential.

This one was rapid, fiery, with day linked to day by great events — the whole tending, as though driven by the Greek Necessity, with her iron wedge, toward the bloody catastrophe. Jackson had advanced from the Rappahannock, as rapid and resistless as some baleful meteor; and the meteor had fallen upon Manassas, the great storehouse of the Federals, and consumed it. Then warned of his danger, Gen. Pope had hastened back, intent on hurling his great column against the audacious intruder, and crushing him in the very hour of his triumph. He would "bag the whole crowd," if he could only reach Manassas on the 28th. He reached it on the 28th, but the game had flown.

Then, on that morning, Pope was at Manassas; Jackson at Groveton, with his left at Sudley; Lee was advancing toward Thoroughfare Gap with the veteran corps of Longstreet; unless Pope could crush Jackson before Lee arrived, he must engage the whole Southern army. As to frightening the man of Kernstown, Port Republic, and Cold Harbor into full retreat, that was hopeless. That trained and resolute gladiator had only fallen back far enough to get out of his adversary's clutches for the moment; not too far to render possible a junction with Lee, if a little time — only a little time! — were given him. At bay on the old battle-field of Manassas, the dangerous game awaited the

attack of the huntsman, ready to show his teeth, and resist *à l'outrance*.

The precious hours hurried on now; every instant counted; the merest novice in war could have told Gen. Pope that the great, the indispensable thing was to interpose a force between Lee and Jackson, hold Thoroughfare Gap, and thus fight the Southern army in detail. But some evil demon seems to have whispered in the ear of the Federal commander: "Allow Lee to unite with Jackson; do not interpose," and the advice was followed. The left wing, under McDowell, had advanced to Gainesville, between Lee and Jackson, and, on the evening of the 28th, it was *ordered thence to Manassas*. Thoroughfare Gap, which should have been defended at all hazards by a large force, was defended by a division only, and this division retired almost as soon as Lee's cannon began to thunder. So trifling was the opposition, that, reaching the gorge at sunset, Longstreet was passing through at nine in the evening; before noon next day he was coming into position on the right of Jackson. The latter had not yet been attacked; but, as though weary of waiting, he had advanced and taken the initiative. While standing at bay, Jackson had seen a dust-cloud on his right, and prepared for an attack. But suddenly from this dust emerged an officer, coming at full gallop, with the intelligence that the dust was caused by Stuart's cavalry. At the same moment a long line of Federal bayonets was seen on the Warrenton road in front; Jackson turned to Ewell, who stood near by; raised his arm aloft; then, letting it fall with a loud slap upon his knee, he said, briefly:

“Ewell, advance!”

Just as the thunder from Thoroughfare began to roar, Ewell threw forward his line, and attacked with fury the Federal force in front of him. It was King's division, and made a splendid fight. Though assailed in flank, they did not give way, nor did they flinch during the whole engagement. It was only at nine o'clock at night, when the news of the abandonment of Thoroughfare probably reached Gen. King, that the Federal lines retired. They had been advancing toward Stone Bridge; they fell back on Manassas. Thus McDowell, Ricketts (at Thoroughfare) and King, had all retired, one after another, upon Manassas. At dawn on the 29th, the golden moment had flitted by; the gate of destiny had silently turned upon its iron hinge; Pope was “massed;” Lee was massed; it was army against army. The brain of Gen. Pope was to be measured against the brain of Gen. Lee.

Jackson had lost his right arm, Ewell—severely wounded in the battle just fought—but the crushing weight of a great anxiety had been lifted from his breast. Lee had arrived; when that intelligence was brought him, he drew a long breath of relief, and his eyes were raised to heaven in prayer and gratitude.

All the morning Gen. Longstreet was coming into position; part of his line of battle was formed, indeed, by nine o'clock, and the whole line resembled an open V. Jackson's force was the left wing; Longstreet's the right. At the angle was Groveton, a small assemblage of houses, near which Stephen D. Lee was in command of about thirty pieces of artillery.

Longstreet was ready about noon. At five in the evening Gen. Pope did not know of his arrival.

Does that statement seem absurd, and is it greeted by any reader with incredulous laughter? Proof—Porter was ordered at *half-past four* to attack the *right and rear of Jackson!* “I believe,” says Gen. Pope—“in fact, I am positive—that at five o’clock in the afternoon of the 29th, Gen. Porter had in his front no considerable body of the enemy. I believed then, as I am very sure now, that it was easily practicable for him to have turned the right flank of Jackson, and to have fallen upon his rear; that if he had done so we should have gained a decisive victory over the army under Jackson, before he could have been joined by any of the forces of Longstreet.”

The present writer spoke to Gen. Longstreet, within twenty yards of his line of battle—kneeling on the right knee, finger on trigger—*before noon*. Gen. Fitz John Porter—that stubborn fighter on the Peninsula and at Sharpsburg—was tried by court-martial, and dismissed from the service, for not attacking Jackson’s right at *five in the evening*, “before he could have been joined by any of the forces of Longstreet,” as says Gen. Pope.

“The force of ‘party’ could no further go!”

We have traced, perhaps tediously, the steps of the two adversaries, by which they steadily advanced to the moment and the place of decisive struggle. That narrative, we thought, would interest the thoughtful reader more than a florid series of paragraphs upon the fighting. The movements which we have followed



decided the second battle of Manassas. When Lee had massed his army, the hour of destiny had struck. The defeat of Gen. Pope was merely a question of time and detail. That result might occur thus or thus: it would certainly take place.

“The histories” will describe in detail the long, obstinate, and bloody, but never doubtful conflict. The present writer retires from the domain of that great muse; it is only some salient points that he begs to speak of. And even these may not be understood without a diagram; for what is plain to those who saw the ground, is the mystery of mysteries to those who have never seen it.

Let us ascend that hill within sight of Groveton and look. We are near the Southern centre. Those gray lines, extending toward the left, are Jackson’s. In his front is a wood and an unfinished railroad cut, where the adversaries are going to grapple in bitterest conflict — to fire within a few paces of each other — to stab and fence with their bayonets — to seize rocks and hurl them, breaking each other’s skulls. In the centre, near at hand, are the guns of Stephen Lee — that hardy soldier, and accomplished gentleman — waiting, grim and silent, for the great assault from the woods beyond Groveton, which round-shot, shell and canister is going to meet. On the right, stretching far beyond the Warrenton road, is the embattled line of Longstreet, bristling with bayonets, and flanked with cannon. He is there, though Gen. Pope is telling Porter that he is not — there, firmly rooted, the most stubborn of realities. On the right of Longstreet are the col-

umns of Stuart's cavalry, held in hand for the pursuit, the men sitting or standing by their horses.

Riding slowly to and fro along the lines are two or three figures, whose appearance the troops greet with shouts.

One is that of a man of about thirty-eight, in a dingy old coat and faded cap, who rides with his knees drawn up, and raises his chin to look from beneath his cap rim, rarely speaking, apparently sunk in deep reverie. That is Jackson.

Another is portly, athletic, with a long brown beard and mustache, half covering the broad, calm face, which habitually smiles—a man apparently of invincible coolness, almost apathetic-looking, but notable. That is Longstreet, Lee's "Old War-Horse"—a man to count on when hard and stubborn fighting is necessary—when to spring like the tiger and never let go, like the bull-dog, is the order of the day.

A third is the gay cavalier yonder, with the heavy mustache, the laughing blue eyes, the gauntleted hand stroking the heavy beard, the lofty forehead, surmounted by the plumed hat, the tall cavalry boots and the rattling sabre. That is Stuart.

Of Jackson, Lee will say when he falls, "I have lost my right arm."

Of Stuart, "I can scarcely think of him without weeping."

When he parts with Longstreet, his "Old War-Horse," at Appomattox, there will be tears in the eyes of each of them, as they remember all those glorious encounters, one of which we are now essaying to describe.

We have looked at the Southern lines, on the Groveton heights—the gray-backs lying down in a crescent-shaped order of battle, and ready ; but we have forgotten the Federal line, as the laughing “rebels” appear to have done. It is a crescent too, with artillery on every knoll, cavalry ready at every opening. The bristling bayonets of the great host curve round, following the formation of the Southern line. The two crescents will not fit into each other without the cement of blood.

Gen. Pope attacked in the afternoon, and his first movement was resolute. He threw his right against Jackson’s left ; a wedge of Federal bayonets pierced a gap in A. P. Hill’s line, and the extreme left of the Confederate army seemed about to be annihilated. Hard fighting only saved it ; the enemy were repulsed, and when they attacked again with fury, they were again driven back. Gen. McGowan reported that “the opposing forces at one time delivered their volleys into each other at a distance of ten paces,” and Hill stated that his division repulsed “six separate and distinct assaults.”

This attack was made by Gen. Kearney, one of the bravest and most accomplished officers of the Federal army. It nearly crushed Hill, but reinforcements enabled him to hold his ground, and at night Kearney retired. Thus terminated the first day’s operations ; the railroad cut was full of dead and wounded, riddled with bullets, pierced with bayonets, and torn by shell, but both lines retired.

The dawn of Saturday, the 30th of August, found the adversaries still face to face. Gen. Pope had de-

terminated to remain and fight it out, though, by retiring to Centreville, he would have united with Franklin and Sumner, coming from Alexandria, been nearer his base, — that is to say, his rations, — and would have occupied a position greatly stronger than at Groveton.

But the evil fate of the Federal commander drove him on, and blinded him. On the 30th, incredible as it may appear, *he seems not to have known of the presence of Longstreet,\** and he still cherished the hope of crushing Jackson. An attack in force was accordingly directed against the Confederate left and centre, and the second battle of Manassas, about three in the afternoon, commenced in all its fury.

It was one of the most desperate of the war, and one of the bloodiest. The Lieutenants of Gen. Pope were abler than their commander, and, if his own countrymen are authority, possessed more military nerve. They attacked with a gallantry which more than once threatened to sweep before it the Confederate line of battle; and, in charge after charge, in the face of frightful volleys of small arms and artillery, essayed to break through the bristling hedge of bayonets before them. The assault upon the Confederate centre was desperate. To this, the attention of the present writer was particularly called.

The charge was made from Groveton, right in the

\* “A wounded Confederate soldier . . . reported that he had heard his comrades say that ‘Jackson was retiring to unite with Longstreet.’ . . . Pope, who had not that day been to the front, accepted the story as indicating a real falling back, and telegraphed to Washington that the enemy was ‘retreating to the mountains.’” — *Mr. Swinton’s Army of the Potomac*, p. 188.

face of Stephen D. Lee's artillery, and appeared to be in column of brigades. The first brigade advanced at a double-quick from the woods, so admirably dressed, that the half-bent knees of the men moved in a line as perfect as on parade. Before, however, they had reached the centre of the open field in front, thirty pieces of artillery opened upon them; the air was filled with shell, bursting in front, above, on the right, on the left of them; great gaps appeared; the line wavered, then broke, then it disappeared, a mere mass of fugitives, in the woods. In ten minutes, however, a second brigade appeared, advanced at a double-quick, like the first, and was in like manner torn to pieces by the frightful fire, disappearing, like the first, beneath the protecting shadows of the woods. A third charge was made; a third and more bloody repulse succeeded; then the great field between the adversaries suddenly swarmed with Jackson's men, rushing forward in the wildest disorder—without pretence of a line, and "every man for himself" toward the enemy.

For a few moments the field thus presented a spectacle of apparent disorganization, which would have made a European officer tremble. Then suddenly all changed. As the men drew near the enemy, they checked their headlong speed; those in front stopped, those in rear closed up; the lines were dressed as straight as an arrow, with the battle-flags rippling as they moved; cheers resounded, and the regiments entered the woods, from which rose the long, continuous crash of musketry, as the opposing lines came together.

That was late in the evening, and the Federal forces

never made another charge. On the contrary, the Confederate lines everywhere advanced.

Longstreet swept steadily round, closing in, with his inexorable grip, upon the enemy's left, toward the Henry House hill. Jackson's whole command advanced. Night descended upon a last infuriate grapple of infantry, clash of cavalry, and duel of artillery, amid which it was easy to distinguish those tumultuous Confederate cheers, whose resounding echoes had, on many battle-fields, announced the hard-won victory.

Gen. Pope was defeated; his cannon glared in the dark from the Henry House hill, and near the Old Stone House; then night swallowed the great scene of wounds and death. Gen. Pope retreated in the darkness to Centreville, whence he speedily continued his withdrawal to Washington.

This was Saturday. It was on Monday that Gen. McClellan telegraphed from Alexandria:

"This week is the crisis of our fate."

Such was the great "Second Battle of Manassas," and it possesses an interest of its own, a strange character separating it from almost all other conflicts. Few events in the annals of war exceed it in that singularly dramatic character which the locality gave it. In July, 1861, Jackson's brigade had here decided the issue of a great battle. Now, in August, 1862, the same commander had grappled with the old adversary, upon almost the very same ground, — almost, but not quite, — for the opponents had changed sides. Hunter had fought Evans and Bee with his back to Sudley; it was Jackson now who held that position. Johnston and Beauregard had assailed, in old days, from the

direction of Manassas; it was now Pope who had his base there — a shifting base, soon to be transferred, as we have seen, to Alexandria!

And all those old familiar objects made a singular impression upon the minds of the soldiers — at least, the writer, who saw the fight, can speak for himself. Before him lies a leaf with these lines in pencil — written on the night of the battle: “Strange, passing strange! Yonder, a mile or two away, is the ground where Evans commenced the ‘battle of the 21st.’ A dispatch, just arrived, says ‘Jackson is at the Stone House’ — we sleep upon the soil, bathed a year ago in Southern blood.”

“Batteries were planted and captured yesterday,” said a writer, “where they were planted and captured last year. The pine thicket, where the Fourth Alabama and the Eighth Georgia suffered so terribly in the first battle, is now strewn with the slain of the invader. We charged through the same woods yesterday, though from a different point, where Kirby Smith, the Blucher of the day, entered the fight before.”

Thus this bloody action had come to add additional shadows to the already weird and sombre fields of Manassas. Again the Federal power was broken; a second time the banks of this stream, once so insignificant, were baptized with the blood of battle.

There are spots on the world's surface over which seem to lower huge, shadowy figures, uttering lugubrious groans, which the winds bear away, and pointing, with distended eyes, and arms in sable drapery, to the yawning graves which curse the beautiful face of nature. Manassas and Cold Harbor are among these

places, and there hover a double troop of sombre shadows; for here men have twice met in mortal grapple — here the graves are double in number; so thick are they, that you tread on them.

You tread on few flowers; hear the sigh of the wind in the leaves of few trees; rarely the birds of spring sing there, and the sunshine itself seems sad.

These spots, with Gettysburg, are the three Golgothas of the Western World.



## V.

### SHARPSBURG.

SHARPSBURG was the first and last great battle on the soil of Maryland. In the hours of one September day was decided the fate of Baltimore and Washington. Tactically a drawn battle, it was strategically a Confederate defeat. Add to these notable features the further circumstance that it was the last fight of McClellan. That ought, of itself, to make it interesting.

Let us follow the steps of the two athletes who had already crossed swords on the banks of the Chickahominy, and who now advanced to a final trial of each other's muscle on the soil of Maryland. These hardy adversaries were Lee, commanding the Army of Northern Virginia, and McClellan, commanding the Army of the Potomac.

On the last day of August, the fate of Gen. Pope had been decided. His shattered battalions had retreated from the fields of Manassas, and Lee pressed on to complete the victory which had cost him so much blood. Gen. Pope had but one ambition now—to save the remnant of his army,—and to this work he sedulously addressed himself, on Monday, the 1st of September, by doing what he ought to have done before

delivering battle — utilizing, that is to say, the troops of Sumner and Franklin.

These had pushed out as rapidly as possible from Alexandria, and now, on this 1st of September, were at Germantown — a small village a mile or two west of Fairfax Court House. Here line of battle was formed, with the right at Germantown, and the left toward Centreville, and the troops were hardly in position when the men of Jackson were seen advancing by the Little River turnpike.

Their commander was worn out, and had sat down under a tree, leaned his back against the trunk, folded his hands across his breast, and was asleep. The crack of the skirmishers awoke him soon; he rose, mounted his horse, and in fifteen minutes was at the head of his column, then advancing upon the enemy.

This battle was a strange one. No sooner had the artillery begun to roar, than, as if in response, the heavens echoed it. The cheers of the men were responded to by the rushing sound of a great wind in the trees; the glare of the cannon, by dazzling flashes of lightning; the thunder of the guns, by crash after crash from the black and lowering clouds. In the midst of this conflict of the elements, the human conflict commenced, and the huge torrents of rain, which soon began to fall, seemed the protest of the inanimate world against this revel of man's passions. So heavy was the rain, that one of Jackson's commanders sent him word that the powder of the men could not be kept dry; he would soon be compelled to abandon his position. But that thing of abandoning a position rarely suited Jackson.

“Tell him to hold his ground,” he said, in brief accents, to the messenger; “if his guns will not go off, neither will the enemy’s!”

And the line remained firm; the enemy made no headway, and yet they fought well. They were fresh, and commanded by the brave Kearney and others. This day was to be the last of the old foe of Fremont. Kearney rushed forward to rally his lines, mistook a Confederate party for his own men, turned and galloped away; but a bullet overtook him.

On the next morning I was riding along the turnpike, and saw a crowd gathering at a small house by the wayside.

“What are those men looking at?” I inquired of a soldier.

“At the body of Gen. Kearney, which Gen. Lee is just going to send, with a flag of truce, to his friends.”

After the fall of this gallant soldier, the enemy did not continue the contest with much ardor. At night they still were there, in the dark and dripping woods, which the storm lashed as before; at dawn they had disappeared. Behind that friendly rampart, covering the Warrenton road to Centreville, Gen. Pope had retreated. At sunrise Stuart’s cavalry rushed with cheers into Fairfax, but the Federal columns were as far as Annandale. In the *debris* — guns, oilcloth, and knapsacks — scattered along the road, you read plainly, “Exit Pope.”

And now the unskilled soldiers, on that 2d of September, 1862, thought “We are going straight to Washington.” No less a personage than Jackson

seemed to encourage this idea. Sitting his horse on the Oxhill ridge, surrounded by the curious, he said briefly to an officer :

“What roads lead to Vienna and ——?”

The latter words were spoken too low to be caught. Receiving a reply, he nodded, reflected an instant, and then rode away. Taking the head of his column, he pushed on — toward Leesburg. Leesburg meant not Washington, but the Cumberland Valley.

Gen. Lee had, it seems, determined to enter Maryland above, and fight his second battle in Pennsylvania.

No time was lost. The men were worn to exhaustion by the heavy marching and fighting, without rations, of the last few weeks; but there was no time to pause. Before the smoke had drifted away from the great field of conflict, the column was in motion; in three days, it passed the Potomac at Leesburg — the men cheering, and the bands playing “Maryland, my Maryland!” On the 7th of September, Lee had massed his army in the vicinity of Frederick City.

Disappointment awaited here those confiding gray people, who supposed that the Marylanders would rush to arms. Most of them rushed into their houses, and slammed the doors. The “rebels” were regarded not as friends, but enemies. The inhabitants were “Union,” and will doubtless take pride in the statement here made, that, as soon as they found they had nothing to fear, they exhibited unmistakable hostility. Those fears, indeed, speedily vanished. They discovered that in Gen. Lee they had to deal with a gentleman, and a “Christian warrior” — a commander

of the strictest ideas. A sneering journal, indeed, said, "If Gen. Lee saw the *top rail* of a fence pulled off, as he passed by, he would dismount and replace it with his own hands." The result was simple, as the logic was obvious. A man who would put back the rails of a fence was not apt to burn dwellings, and plunder larders *à la Pope*. Consequent defiance of him, and more resolute adherence than before to "the best government the world ever saw." The general sentiment, "Wait, wearers of the gray! The patriots in blue are coming!"

These statements may seem strange to some readers.

"Can it be possible," they may say, "that Lee was so greeted on that soil—thus received in the great and illustrious Commonwealth of Maryland, where, in Baltimore—the elegant, the aristocratic, the defiant Baltimore—a large Federal force could alone hold down the almost irrepressible sympathy with the South; where, in the lower counties, the gentlemen throughout the war denounced the North, and cheered the South, in the most public places? Could *Maryland* have thus acted—Maryland, the proud, the thorough-bred, the bitterly Southern Maryland, who had sent her heroic sons to bleed for Virginia—smuggled medicines, cloths, and words of cheer, through the blockade—prayed, with sobs and tears, for the Southern success—whose very women and girls turned away with scorn in their faces, drawing their skirts close to their persons, when Federal officers passed, that they might not be soiled by the contact?"

The explanation is simple. The Southern troops were in Maryland, and they were not in Maryland.

The population differed here, as in Tidewater and North-western Virginia. Lord Baltimore settled eastern, William Penn western Maryland. That is to say, that eastern Maryland was English—which is Virginian—western Maryland Pennsylvanian, that is northern. That explains the whole.

And yet there were some, even here, whose whole hearts went forth to meet and greet the Red Cross flag. In locked-up rooms ladies sewed day and night for the ragged soldiers. In many houses Confederate flags were ready to be produced. From some houses white handkerchiefs were waved—from a few, cheers were heard. Let us not blame very bitterly the owners of these flags, which were never unfolded and given to the air. The “blue patriots” were coming, and the Union neighbors of the Southern sympathizers were sure to denounce them to the Federal vengeance. Hearts were warm, but life and property were dear. It is hard to expect that husbands and fathers should bring beggary and exile on wife and children for any cause. So those flags were never waved, or waved timidly for an instant, and then quietly withdrawn. The stormy winds of that reign of terror blew them away.

On the day after his arrival at Frederick City, Gen. Lee issued an address to the people of Maryland. That calm and admirable paper will present a terrible contrast in history, to the brutal “expatriation order” of Gen. Pope in Culpeper, which the very authorities at Washington had to disown. Lee declared to the people that he had come to aid them “in regaining the rights of which they had been despoiled,” but no

new tyranny would be imposed—no citizen coerced by martial law; to each and all would be accorded the right “to decide his destiny freely, and without constraint.”

When that paper was made public, a few cheers arose, a few halloos resounded; then followed an ominous silence. No enthusiasm was exhibited—only a few recruits appeared—it was obvious that the dream of thousands rushing to the Southern flag was a complete hallucination.

If the result disappointed the great commander of the Confederates, he did not show it. That invincible calmness which characterized him never changed. He knew what he could depend upon, and to that he turned—his old Army of Northern Virginia.

And yet only about one-half of that army was at his orders, a fact which it is absolutely essential to remember in following the events which we are about to record. That is the key-note, and we beg that it will be kept in view. Nearly half of Lee's army was still limping along, barefooted and exhausted, far in rear, on the Virginia side. Not once, but a hundred times, has the statement been made, that these men were stragglers, intending desertion. That statement is an injustice to the brave soldiers of the army. The immense marches and desperate combats of the last month had exhausted them. Barefooted, in rags, unfed, worn out, they dragged their feet along, trying to keep up. And they would have arrived, but for one circumstance. McClellan's rapid advance uncovered the fords near Leesburg; crossing these, the “stragglers” would have found McClellan, not Lee. In fact, Gen. Lee issued

an order forbidding it, and thus these twenty thousand or more unfortunate, not criminal, men, who filled the fields of Loudoun, or crouched on the heights near Leesburg, were pointed at and stigmatized as stragglers.

So it then appeared; and their stronger comrades even, who had been able to keep up, joined in the statement. But time sets everything right. The causes of the larger part of that "straggling" are now known. It was hunger, exhaustion, bleeding feet, and wounds which prevented the majority of those men from being present at the bitter wrestle of Sharpsburg.

Lee was left with about forty thousand men, of all arms, to oppose McClellan's one hundred thousand, then advancing.

The marshalling of that army was one of the most marvellous phenomena of the war. On the 1st day of September, Gen. Pope was defeated—his forces disorganized and demoralized beyond the power of words—and the Government at Washington was looking every moment for the coming of Lee, as it had looked after the Manassas of July, 1861, for the coming of Johnston.

Twelve days afterwards McClellan was at Frederick City with a force of nearly one hundred thousand men, and was pushing after Lee, who was retiring.

Read the Federal documents relating to that period, and see what was thought of McClellan in reality.

They thwarted him, denounced him, professed to despise him, and removed him, to put Pope in his place; but, when the dark hour came, they cried, "Pro-



tect the capital!—you only can do it!” It was true that the axe of the headsman was being sharpened even then for him. When he had perfected the great crime of defeating Lee, his head was to roll, and a voice was to cry aloud from the Bureau of War—a voice marvellously resembling that of Maj. Gen. Halleck:

“So perish all who oppose our policy!”

Meanwhile, however, the services of the skilful soldier were needed—were indispensable. The country confided in him. The troops adored him. He summoned the men to return to their standards; they obeyed him with alacrity; he took the head of the army, and advanced upon Lee. To have believed on the 1st of September that this was possible, would have been to fall into the fantastic. In a week the world had only to look and see. McClellan had under him nearly one hundred thousand troops, and without a scrap of orders\* beyond “Protect the capital,” began an offensive campaign in the direction of Pennsylvania.

On the 12th, as we have said, he had reached Frederick City. His advance had struck Lee’s rear—the adversaries were in view of each other—the thunders of battle again resounded.

Lee had fallen back from Frederick, and his gray columns were defiling through the passes of the Catoc-tan and South Mountains. What did he design? Were those ragged Southerners, tramping on gayly, with their bright muskets, and exclaiming “Pennsylvania! Pennsylvania!” as they had exclaimed “Mary-

\* See his examination before the Committee on the Conduct of the War.

land! Maryland!"—were the veterans of the old army deceived in their anticipations, and had Lee brought them thither only, as some said, to capture Harper's Ferry? The thing was incredible, and remains incredible to-day. Little doubt exists now that his object then, in September, 1862, was the same as in June, 1863—namely, to advance into Pennsylvania, keeping open his communications by the Shenandoah Valley—draw the Federal army as far as possible from its base, bring on a battle, defeat and pursue his opponent, and dictate peace at Baltimore or Washington.

Gen. Lee may have failed, sometimes, to make the best movements during the progress of a battle; he never failed to adopt the greatest, soundest, and most comprehensive combinations to bring on battle. Both in 1862 and 1863, he failed to accomplish his object. But, study those campaigns, and the causes of these failures will be seen. It was not that the profound brain of Lee erred—Providence interposed, and defeated him.

His plan now was, first to reduce Harper's Ferry, which was held by eleven thousand men, with seventy-three pieces of artillery; and Jackson had been already sent thither, by way of Boonsboro,' Williamsport, and Martinsburg—thus taking the Ferry in rear. As soon as this hornet's nest was destroyed, he was to push on and join Longstreet, in the vicinity of Hagerstown; then the whole army, massed, would commence moving toward the Cumberland Valley, drawing McClellan toward Westminster and Gettysburg, as Meade was drawn thither in the month of June, 1863.

Let us turn now to a circumstance so trifling that it seems insignificant, but which overthrew the whole campaign of Lee.

Up to the 12th of September, when McClellan reached Frederick, that commander had moved at the gait of the tortoise. Cautious and deliberate by organization, he was rendered still more cautious and deliberate upon this occasion by the telegrams of his superiors, who wrote constantly, "Take care—you are going too fast—keep nearer the Potomac—Lee is drawing you on—only a small part of his army is north of the Potomac; and, as soon as you are far enough away from the capital, he will attack us from the Virginia side, and all will be over." Those are not the words employed by Gen. Halleck, but they express the exact substance of his orders.

Thus, up to the 12th, McClellan moved snailwise, feeling for Lee, and in utter darkness as to his plans. On that day, however, he found upon a table in Frederick City, where it had been left by the carelessness of some officer, General Lee's "Order of March." That order was a complete revelation of Lee's designs.

Longstreet was to advance by way of Boonsboro,' to Hagerstown.

McLaws was to push for Maryland Heights.

Walker was to cross back, and hasten to Loudoun Heights.

Jackson was then to storm and capture Harper's Ferry, hastening afterwards to join Longstreet.

Then,——the order stopped there. Nothing more, however, was necessary. Then, Lee's army would advance upon Pennsylvania.

Such were the revelations of the Confederate campaign, given in that document. That poor little sheet of paper, which a puff of wind would have carried away, — which a housewife might have used to kindle her fire, — a soldier to light his pipe, — that little scrap of paper would have been cheaply purchased by the Federal commander at a cost of a hundred millions, and it cost nothing. It is true that it cost Lee his campaign.

From that moment, Gen. McClellan had no longer any fears. He could act with energy, for he knew what he was doing. Before, he had advanced with caution, because every step might lose the capital; now he pushed on with vigor, because Pennsylvania was the known object of his opponent. Every card in the hand of Lee was known; his whole game exposed; his combinations defeated in advance. Unless the fighting of the Southern army changed the result, the campaign was as good as decided.

The obvious policy of McClellan was to push vigorously forward, break through the passes of South Mountain, relieve Harper's Ferry, and attack Lee while his army was divided into two parts. He set about his task with rapidity and energy; that he did not succeed was not his fault. Human nerve conquers fate sometimes; hard fighting more than makes up for numbers. McClellan ought to have forced the mountain passes on the 13th. He could not do so until the 14th. He ought to have cut Lee to pieces before Jackson arrived. He could not come up with him. He ought to have routed the Southern army on the field of Sharpsburg, — and that fight, three to one, was the clearest

drawn battle of history. The nerve of the Confederates more than made up for numbers. We shall prove that.

On the 14th of September the great game of chess had commenced in earnest. From that time forward every hour was to be big with events: every movement of the adversaries counted. McClellan was pushing after Lee, intent on relieving Harper's Ferry, and cutting his great opponent to pieces. The hard and stubborn muscle of the Virginian had turned many a sword's edge, — but it seemed that at last the weapon was heavy and sharp enough to accomplish its object, — “to cut even to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow.”

In utter ignorance, meanwhile, of the great misfortune which had befallen him, Gen. Lee was pressing forward to the execution of his plans, wondering doubtless at the unwonted confidence of his adversary, but expecting to catch him tripping before long. The Confederates were in excellent spirits; jest and laughter prevailed. The cavalry were engaged near Frederick; where Hampton charged and captured a battery, but the infantry were marching quietly, caring little.

On the evening of the 14th, Lee's “Order of March” was in full process of accomplishment. Longstreet was at Hagerstown with the advance force of the army. D. H. Hill was holding the gap near Boonsboro', and a small force was at Crampton's; Walker was on Loudoun, and McLaws on Maryland Heights; Jackson was south of Harper's Ferry, and would attack it at early dawn. Unless relieved that night, good-bye to

Harper's Ferry, its eleven thousand men and seventy-three cannon.

Then began the struggle. McClellan thundered in front of Boonsboro' and Crampton's gaps, listening anxiously for the cannon of Jackson. At every step of his advance—which the cavalry, under Stuart, obstinately opposed—the Federal commander fired signal guns, which said to the officer commanding at Harper's Ferry: "I am coming!" Every hour he dispatched scouts to penetrate the lines, reach the Ferry, and say: "Hold on; do not surrender; I will soon release you!"

That assurance seemed reliable. The enormous advantage of knowing an adversary's plans and position was never in all the annals of war better shown. With Longstreet at Hagerstown and Jackson at Harper's Ferry, McClellan knew well that his movements were free,—and he pressed on with ardor to attain the prize.

Soon the thunders of an obstinate combat rose from Boonsboro' gap, where Hooker attacked Hill, succeeded in turning his flank, and at nightfall had virtual possession of the gap—for which the worthy Gen. Reno and fifteen hundred men, however, paid. At the same time an engagement took place at Crampton's gap, nearer to the Potomac, with the same object—to break through to the succor of Harper's Ferry.

Boonsboro' was a combat—division against division—the fight at Crampton's was a *fiasco*. Federal writers tell how Gen. Franklin's corps, with Slocum's division on the right and Smith's division on the left, attacked "a greatly superior force of Confederates in the pass, forced them up the slope, and after

three hours' hard contest carried the crest, taking four hundred prisoners." The "greatly superior force" thus assailed by two divisions was Colonel Tom Munford, with about two hundred dismounted cavalry, and one piece of artillery. When the three brigades of General Cobb—all the infantry that at any time was any where near the gap—arrived from Maryland Heights, the crest *had* been carried, and Colonel Munford was moving down the west side of the mountain. The enemy held the gap—General Cobb's troops were badly put in, and made little fight—the "four hundred prisoners" were of his command. The facts stated here are surprising—but they are facts. The reports of Gen. Stuart will establish them. Two hundred men held in check two divisions.

When night fell on the 14th, McClellan had broken through the mountain—or, to speak more accurately, he held the gaps at Boonsboro' and Crampton's, ready to march at dawn. At dawn he marched; but suddenly a long continuous thunder arose from Harper's Ferry. Jackson was attacking.

McClellan pushed forward; the ominous roar of artillery continued without cessation. Then all at once it stopped—for Jackson was preparing to storm the works with his infantry. That silence was worse than the thunder of the cannon, and the Federal commander must have comprehended its meaning. In fact Jackson had thrown forward Pender—the assault had just begun—the men were rushing on with shouts to carry the Federal defences at the point of the bayonet—when all at once a white flag was seen to flutter upon the breastworks. Colonel Miles had surren-

dered his eleven thousand men, thirteen thousand stand of arms, and seventy-three pieces of artillery.

Harper's Ferry had fallen.

Fallen at the moment when McClellan was only a short march from it, with almost nothing between — at the moment when Miles could almost hear the shouts of the troops coming to his relief; when in a few hours McLaws, on Maryland Heights, would have been captured; Jackson would have been cut off from a junction with the main body, and Lee would have been defeated or driven across the Potomac.

At that supreme moment, when victory and failure were suspended in the balance, the heavy arm of Jackson fell. "Too late" was written, as in words of flame, against the Southern sky, toward which the Federal commander gazed. Soon he knew that his second and greatest aim was in like manner defeated.

Lee had fallen back with Hill, by way of Boonsboro', toward Sharpsburg; Longstreet was summoned to the same point from Hagerstown.

On the morning of the 16th, when McClellan, pushing forward, had reached the Antietam, opposite Sharpsburg, he had, there in front of him, on the hills beyond the stream, both Longstreet and Jackson — returned from Hagerstown and Harper's Ferry. The two halves of the army were once more united. Lee was massed and ready to deliver battle.

Such were the strategic movements which culminated in the obstinately disputed battle of Sharpsburg, or Antietam, as it is called by writers of the North. They have been noticed at some length, being essential to a proper understanding of the action.



Harper's Ferry had retarded Lee, since he could not leave that fortress in his rear; McClellan had advanced with unexpected rapidity; thus Lee was compelled to retire to Virginia or mass his army and accept battle on the north bank of the Potomac.

What force did that army number, and what were the numbers of General McClellan? Alas! little is left to the South save to show that she made a "good fight" and died hard! Let us pause for a moment, then, and establish the truth upon this point. It is curious.

"We fought pretty close upon one hundred thousand men," said Gen McClellan, when interrogated by the War Committee.

"This great battle was fought by *less than forty thousand* men on our side," said Lee, in his report; and Colonel Walter H. Taylor, that high-toned officer and gentleman, then A. A. G. of the army, states Lee's numbers at thirty-seven thousand of all arms.\*

What were Gen. McClellan's?

"Our forces," he says, "at the battle of Antietam, were, total in action, eighty-seven thousand one hundred and sixty-four."

Deduct "cavalry division, four thousand three hun-

\* "OUR STRENGTH AT SHARPSBURG. — I think this is correct:

|                                     |              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Jackson (including A. P. Hill)..... | 10,000       |
| Longstreet.....                     | 12,000       |
| D. H. Hill and Walker.....          | 7,000        |
| Effective infantry.....             | 29,000       |
| Cavalry and artillery.....          | 8,000        |
|                                     | <hr/> 37,000 |

—*MS. Statement of Colonel Taylor.*

dred and twenty," and we have eighty-two thousand eight hundred and forty-four Federal infantry and artillery in action.

Deduct four thousand cavalry from Gen. Lee's total, and we have Confederate infantry and artillery in action, thirty-three thousand.

Of these thirty-three thousand, about eight thousand did not arrive from Harper's Ferry until the middle of the day. The hard fighting of the whole morning was really borne by about twenty-five thousand in line of battle.

More still—the main assault was against the Confederate left, where Jackson, with four thousand, met and repulsed forty thousand.

PROOF. — Gen. Jones, commanding Jackson's old division, reported: — "The division, at the beginning of the fight, numbered not over one thousand six hundred men."

And Early, commanding Ewell's division of three brigades, reported:

|                |       |
|----------------|-------|
| Lawton's ..... | 1,150 |
| Hayes' .....   | 550   |
| Walker's ..... | 700   |
|                | <hr/> |
|                | 2,400 |
|                | 1,600 |
|                | <hr/> |
| Total.....     | 4,000 |

On the Federal side it is not denied that Hooker's corps numbered eighteen thousand. At 7 A. M., Mansfield reinforced him, and at 9, Sumner. Of the fight which ensued, Gen. Sumner says: — "I have always believed that instead of sending these troops into that action *in dribblets*, had Gen. McClellan authorized me to march *these forty thousand* on the left flank of the enemy, we would not have failed to throw them," &c.

“*In dribblets!*” Alas! what would Lee have thought of dribblets of divisions and whole corps! One of these dribblets was eighteen thousand men.

The truth is, that until noon the Confederates fought more than three to one; that throughout the action they were never opposed by less than two and a-half to one; that Jackson, on the left, remained unmoved for hours, though the enemy threw against him about ten to one.

These statements may be regarded as “rebel exaggerations.” That is not important; they are on record, and history will protect her own.

Lee might thus have retired, without imputation upon his courage — might have recrossed into Virginia and declined battle. He remained upon the soil of Maryland and accepted it.

Sharpsburg followed; and this great combat we now proceed to trace in outline.

On the afternoon of the 16th, Lee had about twenty-five thousand men in line of battle, his back to Sharpsburg, his left hand touching the Potomac, his right extending into the angle formed by the river and Antietam creek.

Sharpsburg is a village, in the midst of a rolling country, dotted with farm houses, lost in orchards; fields divided by stone walls; and through the valley in front of it rolls the narrow and crooked Antietam, spanned by rustic bridges on the Boonsboro’ and other roads.

On the high ground beyond, at the foot of the mountain, McClellan’s numerous infantry and artillery were

drawn up, his main strength massed on the right, to strike the Southern left.

The plans of a general are more interesting than the fighting of his troops. McClallan's design here was to turn the Confederate left, driving Lee into the river, and he never ceased hammering at that "fatal left," until his right wing was nearly shattered by the hard anvil against which this hammer struck.

On the evening of the 16th, Hooker, commanding the Federal right, crossed the stream and gained ground, after sharp fighting. On the morning of the 17th, the day of Sharpsburg, he attacked from this advanced position.

At the first streak of dawn, in the clear autumn sky, before the variegated leaves of the forest trees were reddened by sunrise, the opposing lines began to thunder.

Hooker, with eighteen thousand men, and Mansfield's corps hastening forward to support him, was attacking the four thousand men of Jackson. The woods reverberated, the echoes rolled among the hills, the fields were full of the long rattle of musketry, mingled with shouts and cheers. Jackson grappled with his adversary, and held his ground so well that Hooker was wholly unable to drive him back.

Such was the state of things when, at seven o'clock, just as the sun was soaring above the mountain in his rear, Gen. Mansfield arrived and threw his corps into action. Before this great reinforcement the Confederates were pressed back, and a point of woods beyond the Hagerstown road was seized by the Federals; not, however, without terrible loss and disorganization.

Jackson's loss was frightful, but his opponents' worse. Gen. Mansfield was mortally wounded; Gen. Hooker was shot and borne from the field; the Federal troops were breaking in spite of their success, when the corps of Sumner arrived, and was thrown forward, just in time to prevent a thorough rout.

Hear the evidence of Gen. Sumner:

"On going upon the field, I found that Gen. Hooker's corps had been dispersed and routed. I passed him, some distance in the rear, where he had been carried, wounded, but I saw nothing of his corps at all as I was advancing with my command on the field. I sent one of my staff officers to find where they were, and Gen. Ricketts, the only officer we could find, stated that he could not raise three hundred men of the corps."\*

Strange result of the great assault of Hooker and Mansfield, with their thirty thousand men, on the four thousand of Jackson!

"I saw nothing of his corps at all!"

"He could not raise three hundred men!"

It was in reference to this portion of the action that Gen. Sumner groaned out that the troops were sent in "in dribblets" — that is, corps after corps.

Such was the result on the Federal side — repulse with terrible loss; Mansfield killed; Hooker wounded; the line breaking. On the Confederate side the mortality was truly frightful. Gen. Starke, commanding Jackson's division, was killed; more than a half of some brigades, more than a third of others, dis-

\* Report on Conduct of War, 1, 368.

abled—in many regiments there were almost no commissioned officers. Jackson had repulsed the great assault, but the ground, on which his firm foot yet rested, was bathed in the best blood of the South.

But this was the mere preface—the ante-chamber to the temple of horror. Pausing only to pant and recover their breath after the fierce struggle, the Federal forces reformed their line; cheers rose from the great mass, and the huge wave rolled forward—this time bent on enveloping Jackson's left and driving him back on the centre.

The attack was met with desperation. Each soldier seemed to feel that on his firmness depended the fate of Gen. Lee. Jackson half faced to the left the two small brigades of Hood—one of them numbering, he says, but eight hundred and sixty-four men—rushed forward and filled the gap thus made on Jackson's right. In an instant the fiercest wrestle of the great day of Sharpsburg began, in the midst of cheers, shouts, thunder, and lightning.

The brush of a grand painter could alone convey something like a conception of that wild grapple. Jackson, reinforced by Hood, had now about six thousand men engaged in all, and these were stubbornly breasting the great rush of Hooker, Mansfield, and Sumner. The odds were beyond mortal endurance. Worn out and decimated by the very attrition of the struggle, Jackson was being forced back, when McLaws and Walker at last arrived with reinforcements; then everything suddenly changed.

Never in all the war was the value of “fresh troops,” however small their number, more conclusively shown.

In the twinkling of an eye, the Southern lines were reformed and ceased retiring. Cheers rose; staggering volleys followed; Jackson's whole line advanced with wild shouts, and drove the Federal line back. Before he stopped the advance, Jackson had forced back Hooker more than half a mile; had resumed the position from which he was driven in the morning; then he stood grim and defiant, ready to renew the struggle. The great assault of McClellan had been completely repulsed; the battle of Sharpsburg was decided.

This was the grand conflict of the day, and on the left centred the main interest—but once or twice affairs were critical on the right and centre.

Jackson had just repulsed his opponent, when an accident occurred which nearly resulted in Gen. Lee's destruction.

In the centre was Rodes' brigade, and,—during the momentary absence of that officer,—through a misconception of orders the brigade was withdrawn. No sooner had this occurred than the Federal forces rushed forward; there was nothing to meet them; in an instant Gen. Lee's centre would have been pierced and his army cut in two.

Then, what they wanted in numbers, the Southerners made up by reckless courage. Gen. D. H. Hill galloped thither, and hastily collected about two hundred men, whom he led gallantly forward. Miller's battery hastened up, unlimbered, and opened a furious fire. Col. Cooke, with about three hundred men of his regiment, faced the masses rushing on, "standing boldly in line," says Gen. Lee, "without a cartridge."

Then a curious spectacle was presented to the soldiers of both armies. Lieut. Gen. Hill was seen leading against the enemy a force of two hundred men, cheering them on in person. Lieut. Gen. Longstreet was seen on foot, loading and firing a piece of artillery.

The Federal division of Gen. Richardson, imposed upon by this bold front, came to a halt and remained stationery until Lee had filled the gap.

So, the centre was saved.

On the right, there was also a moment of extreme peril. Let us briefly relate how things stood there and what was done.

Nearly east of Sharpsburg, was a bridge over the Antietam. On the heights above this bridge rested the right of Lee; opposite, across the stream, were drawn up the fifteen thousand men of Burnside, with Porter at his back.

This force was held in reserve, for "eventualities" came soon after sunrise, when Hooker could not advance.

Then McClellan argued and acted like a good soldier. That stubborn stand on the left must mean that Lee had massed his main force there, leaving the right wing weak. Burnside was thereupon ordered, at eight o'clock, to pass the bridge, and immediately assail the Southern right.

At half-past eight he had not moved; not at nine. McClellan sent new orders and more urgent ones, for the combat on his right was going against him, and a diversion was absolutely necessary. Still Burnside



did not move — at ten he was still there ; at twelve he had not passed the Antietam.

Meanwhile, Lee had acted. He had thrown Walker and McLaws from the right, to Jackson's relief — leaving only the two thousand five hundred men of Gen. Jones opposite Burnside.

That officer finally advanced across the bridge about noon, and “moved with such extreme caution and slowness” toward Lee's right, that he did not attack the crest where it rested until three o'clock.

Then he stormed the crest and planted his artillery upon it ; but the delay had ruined everything. Just as the crest was carried, A. P. Hill arrived from Harper's Ferry with two thousand men.\* Adding these to the two thousand five hundred of Jones, driven back from the crest, with this force of four thousand five hundred he attacked Burnside in turn, driving back to the bridge his fifteen thousand troops, and terminating the day upon the right of the field as Jackson had terminated it upon the left.

It was at this moment that McClellan, seeing Burnside driven back, sent him word, it is said :

“Hold your ground ! If you cannot, then the bridge to the last man ! Always the bridge ! If the bridge is lost, all is lost !”

The defeat of Burnside was so decisive, that the moment was indeed full of peril. But night came to stop an advance.

“It was now nearly dark,” says Gen. Lee, “and the enemy had massed a number of batteries to sweep the

\* Reports Army N. Va., Vol. 2, 129.

approaches to the Antietam, on the opposite side of which the corps of Gen. Porter, which had not been engaged now appeared to dispute our advance. Under these circumstances, it was deemed injudicious to push our advantage further."

Night descended—the thunder ceased—the great pall of darkness fell over the bloody field, covered with the dying and the dead.

McClellan was repulsed—thus victory belonged to Lee.

Such was Sharpsburg, one of the most desperate and sanguinary struggles of the war. We have endeavored to describe it with the impartiality of truth itself—and no statement has been made which the record will not vouch for.

As to the numbers, the statements rest upon the words of Lee and Jackson; and it is not probable that the world will doubt them.

That with a force so small Lee could repulse an army so large as his opponent's, is due to two simple facts:

I. The troops were manœuvered with a foresight and promptness which characterize only the greatest generals of history.

II. The men were the veterans of the old Army of Northern Virginia; were officered by Jackson, Longstreet, and Hill; and fought as the three hundred of Leonidas fought at Thermopylæ—ready to die, but not to surrender.

Taken altogether, that fight on the left was one of the most astonishing of any war—for four thousand stood for hours against thirty or forty thousand, and

more than once drove them back in disorder. Hill's repulse of Burnside, four to one, on the right, was glorious—but Burnside died easy. Jackson's repulse of Hooker, ten to one, was grand—for Hooker died hard. That combat indeed brought back the old ages of mythology. This Titan stood erect, strong and defiant, if not unscathed, when the whole magazine of thunderbolts had been exhausted upon him.

On the next day, Gen. Lee remained in line of battle, awaiting another attack; but none was made. The Federal loss "and disorganization," says Gen. McClellan, prevented it on that day.

On the morning of the next, Lee had recrossed the Potomac, to supply his army with rations and ammunition. His opponent attempted to follow, and was driven into the river.

So the Maryland campaign ended.

In October, Gen. Halleck telegraphed to McClellan:

"Cross the Potomac, and give battle to the enemy, or drive him south."

McClellan crossed, and at Warrenton was "relieved from the command of the Army of the Potomac."

Hapless McClellan! It was harsh. Lee would have annihilated the "whipped army" of the Potomac retreating to Malvern Hill "like a parcel of sheep."\* McClellan's cool generalship saved it. Lee would have gone to Pennsylvania, and advanced to Philadelphia—McClellan organized Pope's remnants, advanced, and fought, and drove his adversary from

\* See testimony of Gen. Hooker (Conduct of War, 1, 580) for these strong expressions. "A few shots from the rebels," said Gen. Hooker, "would have panic-stricken the whole command."

Maryland. Lee would have recrossed in October—McClellan stopped him, and by advancing into Virginia forced his great foe to fall back Richmonward. And after all these services, the axe fell.

“Off with his head! So much for Buckingham!”

Gen. McClellan received the fatal order while conversing, in his tent, near Warrenton, with Gen. Burnside. His countenance did not change, and in a voice as calm as a May morning, he said, handing the paper to his companion:

“Well, Burnside, you are to command the army.”

Never was a more singular freak of destiny. The officer who had failed to cross the Antietam and drive back Hill's four thousand five hundred, with his fifteen thousand, at Sharpsburg, was now to cross the Rappahannock and drive back the Army of Northern Virginia, under Lee.

Of that appointment one might have said:—“It will not and it cannot come to good.” But the fiat had gone forth.

McClellan set out for New Jersey. Burnside commenced his march toward—Fredericksburg.

## VI.

### FREDERICKSBURG.

IN December, 1862, the Army of Northern Virginia was holding the heights south of Fredericksburg.

At three o'clock in the morning, on the 11th of that month, the troops were waked from slumber by a single gun, which sent its warning voice across the gloom.

Then this first discharge was followed by another, and the men sprung to arms; the camps buzzed; line of battle was formed—all along the crest, from Marye's Hill down to Hamilton's Crossing, the army stood ready.

The moment had come; for those two cannon, suddenly thundering in the cold night-watches, were signal guns. Through their bronze mouths, Lee said to his men:

“Get ready! The enemy are crossing!”

Soon, from the direction of Fredericksburg, came the quick rattle of musketry. Something of interest was evidently going on there. Gen. Lee was soon in the saddle, and couriers, passing at a swift gallop, like phantoms through the darkness, brought him intelligence from the front.

In fact, Gen. Burnside was making, at last, his great

advance to storm the heights on the Virginia side of the Rappahannock. Knowing well the mettle of his great opponent, Lee — honestly distrusting his ability to command so large an army\* — utterly opposed to a decisive trial of strength at this time and place — Burnside had yet been pushed forward by his Government; ordered to strike; and on the morning of this day of December, 1862, he was obeying.

All the night of the 10th, pontoons were being hauled down to the stream, at Fredericksburg and below; at three o'clock in the morning, as we have seen, the signal guns of Lee announced that the boats were being lashed together to cross over the army.

At the town, took place the main effort to impede the movement. The river street was lined with Barksdale's Mississippians, and no sooner had they heard the rattle of timbers and the hum of busy workmen, through the dense fog on the stream, than every man was on the alert. The Federal pontoneers worked like beavers in the gloom, knowing the peril they were exposed to — and soon their expectations were realized. A sudden storm of bullets hissed through the mist; the foremost workmen fell dead or mortally wounded, and the rest recoiled before the unseen enemy.

Time after time the effort was renewed, but always the fire of the Mississippians drove back the boat-builders. One, two, three, four, five, six hours passed with no better success — when, in a rage, doubtless, at this ill-fortune, Gen. Burnside, at ten o'clock, opened

\* “I told them that I was not competent to command such a large army as this. I had said the same over and over again to the President and Secretary of War.” — *Burnside in Conduct of War*, 1, 650.

on the town with one hundred and forty-seven pieces of artillery.

Then, as though driven from the field by this tremendous cannonade, the fog rose, drifted off, and disappeared. From an eminence, jutting out from the crest of hills on which his army was drawn up, Gen. Lee looked in silence at the curious and tragic spectacle.

On the hills beyond the river were seen long rows of Federal cannon, grim and sullen, or spouting smoke and flame. Every instant came the quick, red glare, the bellowing roar, and the burst of shell above the devoted town.

Fredericksburg was being bombarded—racked right and left with a cross-fire of shot and shell. This hurricane of death swept through the streets, incessant, remorseless, never relaxing in its fury. Houses crashed down; the church steeples shook and tottered, as shot tore them; women and children ran for life, pursued by bursting shell; flames rose, and a great cloud of lurid smoke drifted away, mingling itself with the snowy cannon smoke on the Stafford hills.

When, at noon, the cannonade ceased, the town was on fire in many places, and long after night the red flames of burning mansions contended with the darkness, rendering wilder and more weird the sombre scene of destruction. At intervals only, a single gun roared sullenly from the northern hills, like a wild beast growling over his prey.

Soon after the beginning of the cannonade, another attempt was made to throw the pontoons over, but it failed again. Barksdale had not retreated; amid crash-

ing chimneys and houses thundering down, his men still stood—and every effort of the Federal troops to lay their bridges was defeated. It was only in the afternoon that a brave officer of the Northern army threw across three regiments in barges. These advanced; assailed Barksdale furiously; drove him from the place; then the pontoon bridge was rapidly laid, and the head of Burnside's column was at once thrown over.

The cruel bombardment did not effect that—it effected absolutely nothing. It was the three regiments in barges, which a third lieutenant, without a beard on his face, would have sent across twelve hours before.

Lee, wrapped in his old gray riding cape, looked on, as we have said, from the spot now called "Lee's Hill," near the telegraph road, and beside him stood Longstreet, stout, heavily bearded, and calm, like his commander. It was hard to realize, looking at these unmoved faces, that the Virginian and the Carolinian were witnessing the destruction of one of the oldest and most hospitable of Virginian cities.

If any one doubts the extent of that destruction, let him go thither, as the present writer did, the other day, and look at the long rows of ruins, the ghost-like chimneys, the blackened walls, and the river facade of the houses riddled with cannon balls. In one small house I counted fifty. And the fact is not surprising. In two hours, Gen. Burnside had fired seven thousand three hundred and fifty rounds upon the town.

So, on that night of December the 11th, Fredericksburg was torn to pieces—the shattered church spires



shone in the light of roaring flames—the random guns from the “Chatham” hill bellowed sombre and triumphant over all.

Throughout the night, and all day on the 12th, Gen. Burnside was crossing. It was a very striking spectacle, viewed from the summit of Lee’s Hill—where Gen. Lee, as before, stood, looking on in silence. Opposite the pontoon bridge were seen the heavy and dark masses of the Federal infantry, about to cross. The great columns undulated as they moved down from the hills, like gigantic serpents, with glittering bayonets and gun-barrels for scales. Above them banners waved—through the clear December air came the notes of the drum and bugle; you could even hear the rumble of the artillery—those bronze war-dogs, in whose mouths the thunder slumbered. All day, as we have said, the Federal forces were crossing, with little opposition.

On the night of the 12th, the army was over, and it was evident that on the next day Gen. Burnside would deliver battle, by advancing to storm the position occupied by Lee.

What was that position, and what the character of the ground upon which was fought this bloody action? Let us look at it. Battles are mazes, without some knowledge of the localities. Let us take our stand on the eminence called Lee’s Hill, which juts out from the crest, commanding a full view of all. Beneath us stretches a plain extending to the Rappahannock. Beyond the plain the roofs and spires of Fredericksburg are seen, not a mile away. On the northern shores of the river, rise lofty hills, crowned with white mansions.

In front of these mansions, flags are seen to flutter—they indicate the head-quarters of some Federal general. Along the hills dusky objects dot the crest—they are cannon. Through the gorges you see dark and motionless masses—they are Federal infantry, waiting for the order to advance.

That officer on horseback yonder, slowly pacing along the hills, is perhaps Gen. Burnside, reconnoitering. Those specks upon the river banks are pickets. Behind the hill yonder, something stands which you cannot make out—it is a pontoon train ready to move.

Let us look now at the southern shore. To the right and left of us stretches the wooded crest upon which Gen. Lee has drawn up his line of battle. On the left, extending from his centre to the river above, is Longstreet's line, embattled, ready, and bristling yonder on the summit of Marye's Hill, with grim-looking cannon. There the Irish brigade is going to charge with magnificent *élan*, and strew the fatal field in front of that stone wall, at the foot of the hill, with their bodies. On the right is Jackson, holding the wooded crest to the point at Hamilton's Crossing, where it sinks into the plain. At every opening in his line you see the muzzles of cannon; on the hill above the crossing, which the men are going to call "Dead Horse Hill," he has massed his batteries, to rake the field before him when the enemy rush forward there, as it is evident they will. Still further, on the right, in the great plain reaching to the Massaponnax, Stuart is visible with his guns—not with his cavalry. He has reconnoitered the whole ground; found the fields intersected by deep ditches, with long rows of cedars lining them,

and cavalry cannot operate there. The horsemen accordingly are drawn up in the woods, on the flank — Stuart is going to mass thirty pieces of artillery in that field, and open a furious fire on the Federal left as they charge the slopes of “Dead Horse Hill.”

Thus the Confederate position is powerful enough, giving many advantages. But the enemy have some, too. On the banks of the river yonder are steep bluffs, under which they can find shelter from the shot and shell; in the numerous ditches, lined with cedars, they will have the best possible rifle-pits from which to fire upon the cannoneers of Stuart. If the Southern lines advance too far into the plain, the dusky objects yonder, on the heights across the river, which are “thirty-pound Parrotts,” will sweep the whole field, tearing men, horses, and guns to pieces with their iron thunderbolts.

As long, however, as Lee holds his position upon the heights, there can be small doubt of the result, Humanly speaking, he cannot be driven from the ground. His fifty thousand muskets can hold it forever. Thrice Burnside’s force can make no impression, and the proof is that one-third of Lee’s is going to repulse him without difficulty.

The situation must have looked ugly to the Federal commander, but he did not seem to realize its full significance. He must have seen that to advance across that fatal plain would cost him rivers of blood; that Lee’s position here was twice as strong as that at Sharpsburg, and his army twice as numerous as then — and yet, in spite of all, in the very teeth of fate, Gen. Burnside seemed determined to risk all; to advance across that

plain, and to butt, bull-like, against this fortress, bristling with bayonets and cannon. How to attack and fight a successful battle there would have puzzled Napoleon. It is difficult to say what that great master of the art of war would have done upon the occasion; but it may be declared with absolute certainty that he would not have done what Gen. Burnside did. Somewhere—either on the right or the left—the Emperor would have massed his battalions, and launched half his force at Lee, with the fury of an avalanche which bursts through every obstacle. Instead of adopting this, the only plan which promised success, Gen. Burnside ordered assaults to be made on the right and left *with single divisions*. These two divisions it was hoped, would be able to break through the veteran corps of Longstreet and Jackson!

Does any reader say that this statement is absurd? The truth is of record. In that great “open sesame” to all hidden things, “The Report on the Conduct of the War,” the facts are recorded. Gen. Burnside himself convicts himself of fatal ignorance of the ground—of a terrible misapprehension of the obstacles in his path.

The proof is given.

“The enemy,” said Gen. Burnside,\* “had cut a road along in the rear of the line of heights where we made our attack. . . . I obtained from a colored man, from the other side of the town, information in regard to this new road which proved to be correct. I wanted to obtain possession of that new road, and

\* Conduct of War, Part I., pp. 653.

that was my reason for making an attack on the extreme left. . . . Then I purposed to make a direct attack on their front, and drive them out of their works."

That is to say, that the little "Mine Road" running in rear of Gen. Lee's right wing, presented itself to General Burnside's imagination, after talking with the "colored man," as a great military highway, cut by his opponent, connecting his wings, and constituting the key of his position. To gain possession of that mere bridle path appeared to him a matter of the first importance, and *a division* was sent to drive Jackson from in front of it!

Proof—the order of Gen. Burnside, December 13, 5.55 A. M., to General Franklin, on his left.\* "Send out at once a division at least . . . to seize, if possible, the heights near Captain Hamilton's."

Fatal Order No. 1!—The "heights near Captain Hamilton's" were the hills upon which Jackson was drawn up with his triple line of bayonets, and his artillery waiting to do the terrible work it did do.

In the same manner Lee's left, at Marye's Hill, was to be assailed, and driven back — *by a division*.

Proof—the same order, announcing Burnside's directions to Gen. Sumner on his right. "He (Burnside) has ordered another column, of a division or more, to be moved from Gen. Sumner's command up the Plank Road to its intersection with the Telegraph Road, where they will divide, with the object of seizing the heights on both of those roads."

\* Conduct of War, Part I., p. 701.

Fatal Order No. 2!—The “Plank Road” led straight into the muzzles of Longstreet’s cannon, on Marye’s Hill—“the heights” in question. The point of “intersection with the Telegraph Road” was the locality of that sombre, fatal, terrible stone wall, lined with Southern marksmen, in front of which the divisions of French, Hancock, and Humphreys, charged so splendidly, and were torn to pieces by the concentrated fire of small arms and artillery hurled upon them within point blank range, as they uselessly rushed to their death.

“Holding these heights, with the heights near Captain Hamilton’s,” adds General Burnside’s order, “will, I hope, compel the enemy to evacuate the whole ridge between these points.” If not, then, as he says in his testimony, “I proposed to make a direct attack on their front, and drive them out of their works.”

Such was the programme of operations adopted by Gen. Burnside. It cannot be said to be mis-stated, for it is given on the authority of his general order, and his own testimony. He proposed to assault the two powerful positions at Marye’s Hill and Hamilton’s Crossing, with *a division at a time*, and it will be seen that it was done. Gen. Meade, commanding the assaulting force at Hamilton’s, says he had in all only ten thousand men engaged. In reserve, looking on, were the forty-five or fifty thousand men of Franklin.\*

From the moment when Gen. Sumner, command-

\* See the testimony of Gen. Meade, Franklin’s force, in all, he says, was “fifty-five or sixty thousand men.”

ing the two corps of the Right Grand Division, and Gen. Franklin, commanding the two corps of the Left Grand Division, received that order to attack in dribblets, they must have felt that all was over. This Gibraltar was going to be pelted with popguns, when a battering ram, and a heavy one, was needed. Why this frightful blunder? The explanation is not difficult. Gen. Burnside had estimated his own powers with singular justice. What his government regarded as unfounded self-depreciation was really modest, good sense. He was painfully unequal to the arduous work which the authorities had thrust upon him. He did his best, but that best was bad indeed. The annals of war contain no blunder greater than that attack at Fredericksburg.

But it is time to terminate this tedious preface—tedious, but necessary. For the rest, it diminishes the lustre of the Southern triumph—this exposition of the military deficiencies of the Federal commander. The troops did their part, and did it well. They fought with admirable dash and courage, until they found what a *cul-de-sac* they had been thrust into; then they sullenly refused to charge again, tired of a farce so bloody.

But it was not a farce; it was a tragedy. Of that the reader shall judge.

At midnight of the 12th December, this, then, was the position of the adversaries. Lee was on the wooded heights with Longstreet commanding his left, Jackson his right—waiting. Burnside was on the plain upon the river's bank, and in the town—Sumner commanding his right, Franklin his left, Hooker his centre, in

reserve, beyond the river. From the gray lines *perdus* in the woods of the west no sound came. From the blue multitude rose a hum, a buzz, a murmur, harsh and threatening. Arms clashed, horses neighed, artillery rumbled—above all rang, from time to time, the metallic vibrations of the bugle.

The force of Burnside was somewhat more than one hundred thousand muskets.\* Lee numbered about fifty thousand bayonets in all. The odds were thus two to one about.

Of the *morale* of the Northern army, the present writer knows nothing. The ragged veterans of Lee were joyful. Never had the old army of Northern Virginia been in better trim for an obstinate, dashing fight. The troops were all bone and muscle—every eye laughed—victory seemed to hover in the air above them, and salute them in advance. All day they had laughed and jested; they were now at midnight sleeping on their arms, awaiting, without care, that dawn which would unchain the thunder.

At the first dim intimation of the coming day, seen through the fog which wrapped all the landscape, the woods began to buzz. Every man clutched his gun. Then cheers were heard resounding in the underwood along the slope near Hamilton's Crossing. Lee was passing in front of the lines accompanied by Jackson and Stuart.

These three men were, *par excellence*, the *viri il-*

\* "Gen. Franklin had now with him about one-half the whole army," says a Federal writer. "That force," says Gen. Meade, "amounted to from fifty-five thousand to sixty thousand men."—*Cond. of War*, 1, 691.



*lustræ* of the Southern army. There were others whose figures will live forever on canvas, in marble, and cut deep in human hearts — Johnston, Beauregard, Longstreet, Hill, Hood, and a hundred more. But those three rose tallest and most distinct from the smoke of the Virginia battles — Lee, Jackson, and Stuart. They owed that prominence not only to their soldiership, but to the personal and mental individuality which characterized them.

Look at them for a moment, as they ride along the lines, and you will see that they are types.

Lee is the model cavalier of the great Anglo-Norman race. His figure is tall and erect; his seat in the saddle perfect. His uniform is plain but neat; his equipment beyond criticism. Stately, thoroughbred, graceful in every movement, there is something in his glance, in the very carriage of his person, that is illustrious and imposing. He has the army-leader look. There is not the remotest particle of ostentation, much less of arrogance, in his bearing. This man was a gentleman, you can see, before he was a soldier.

Jackson's is a figure altogether different. He has cast aside to-day, by mere accident, his old dingy uniform, to put on a fine dress-coat, which Stuart has given him — an overcoat of quite surpassing elegance — and a new cap, which dazzles the eye with its braid. But he cannot hide the individuality of "Stonewall Jackson." His seat in the saddle is ungraceful; he rides with his knees drawn up; his chin is in the air, and he looks out from beneath his fine new cap as he did from beneath his old dingy one, thrown aside. It

is scarcely an army-leader that you look at — rather a shy and absent-minded student, drawn forth from the pious meditations of his study by the bruit of war, and listening with a sort of bewildered glance to all this clash of arms. Awkward, unimposing, silent, there is in this figure not the least hint of the man of Port Republic, Cold Harbour, and Sharpsburg — never has the flawless diamond of supreme military genius presented itself to men so thoroughly “in the rough,” uncut and unburnished. To know its quality, you must strike against it. Not the heaviest sledge-hammer of war can splinter it.

Last of the illustrious trio is Stuart, the ideal cavalry commander of all imagination — young, laughing, joyous, superb, with rattling sabre, brilliant sash, floating plume — devoted, fearless, ever hoping; and ready day or night, in sunshine or in storm, to carry out the plans of Lee — to fight with infantry, artillery, or cavalry, and conquer, or “die trying.” In his dazzling glance you read the character of this man, who laughs at peril and dares it to do its worst — the incarnation, in the new Revolution, of the dead Rupert of England.

In 1864, Lee was maimed, indeed. At Chancellorsville he had lost his right arm. At Yellow Tavern he had lost his left.

The cheers rose, rung in the woods, and accompanied the three commanders as they rode on to the right, along the railroad, to the old Richmond stage road. This led straight toward the river, striking the river road running parallel with the stream, near the Federal left.

Franklin was already moving. Stuart conducted

Gen. Lee to the intersection of the roads, close on the enemy, and pointed out the dusky figures in the fog: they were Federal sharpshooters. As the group sat their horses, motionless, the depths of the fog began to stir. Black specks advanced on the humid field, and bullets whistled. Then the dark lines of the enemy were seen as they slowly and steadily advanced.

Stuart called to Pelham, his chief of artillery, and gave him an order. Pelham disappeared at a gallop; soon the roll of artillery was heard: a Napoleon gun advanced at a rapid gallop through the fog; and Pelham opened fire from the intersection of the roads upon the enemy's left as they came on.

"Meade advanced across the plain," says a Federal writer,\* "but had not proceeded far before he was compelled to stop and silence a battery that Stuart had posted on the Port Royal road, and which had a flank fire on his left.

This battery was one Napoleon — captured at Seven Pines, and used so well at Cold Harbour. Pelham's fire was so rapid and incessant that it checked Meade's whole division. Five thousand men halted until that hornet could be brushed away.

To silence the galling fire, General Meade brought up two or three batteries, posted them in Pelham's front, at point blank range, and opened on him a furious fire of shot and shell, to which was added the cross fire of some thirty-pound Parrotts on the hills beyond the river. The storm of projectiles thus hurled at the one Napoleon was enough to move the nerve of a vete-

\* Mr. William Swinton — "Army of the Potomac," p. 246.

ran. It did not touch Pelham's, though he was literally a "beardless boy." He continued the fire, in the midst of dead and dying men of the gun detachment, and staid until his last round had been fired, and a peremptory order came for him to move.

Lee had witnessed the hard combat from the hill above.

"It is glorious to see such courage in one so young!" he exclaimed; and in his brief report of the battle, he spoke of the young man as the "gallant Pelham," knighting him thus upon the field.

This minute mention of a simple accident will be pardoned in the writer of these lines. Pelham was his friend, and is dead — if heroes ever die.

Stuart tried to support Pelham with another gun, but it was smashed to pieces; then Gen. Meade rushed forward. It was nine or ten o'clock; the fog had lifted; the plain was all alive with serried lines of infantry; and with the thunder of artillery, the rattle of small arms, and the cheers of onset, the Federal forces dashed up headlong to the wooded slope where Jackson waited, grim and silent, to receive their attack.

They had come within a few hundred yards; the Confederate skirmishers ran in, as though a wind had swept them back; Meade gallantly rushed on, when suddenly from the crest a volcano flamed. It was Jackson's artillery, held in leash until then. Now, all at once, it opened. The crest spouted smoke and flame; a detonation tore the air, and the Federal lines gave back, with huge gaps in them, made by the frightful fire of shell and cannister. In spite of this bloody reception, however, the ranks were quickly reformed; the lines

were dressed with admirable coolness; and, though the artillery upon the crest roared on, doing bloody work, the men rushed headlong at the heights.

There a stubborn, bitter, desperate combat took place — the Confederates not moving. But a fatal accident came suddenly to the enemy's assistance. Hill had left a gap between two of his brigades — the Federal forces pierced it — the line fell back; in a few moments Jackson's first line was driven, and the Federal troops rushed up, and gained the crest.

That charge was as gallant as any in the war, and it deserved to be supported. The support did not come. Five thousand men had dashed into the lion's mouth — the teeth were about to close upon them — fifty thousand in the plain beneath were looking on as mere spectators of this grapple of life and death. Gen. Burnside's order had been carried out. Franklin had sent the "division" to "seize the heights near Capt. Hamilton's;" they had been seized by that brave rush, and that was all. In thirty minutes Meade's division was driven from the hill — the earth was littered with his dead — the survivors were flying down the slope, pursued by merciless volleys, leaving blood upon every dry leaf, dead bodies in every ravine.

Gregg's brigade had met them on the crest, as they rushed up — had checked them without difficulty — there never had been any hope for them. That was only Jackson's second line; his third did not take the trouble to move.

Meade had lost forty men out of every hundred; the rest were flying, and carrying dismay into the ranks of their comrades.

Both armies saw this repulse — terrible, bloody, mortal. From a hill, near the centre of his line, Gen. Lee looked on with a glow in his cheeks, and a martial light in the clear, commanding eyes, which had witnessed in their time so many scenes of carnage. As Gen. Meade's lines were now seen flying, pursued by Jackson's men, Lee gazed at them in silence; then, in that deep voice, which never lost its grave and measured accent, he murmured:

"It is well this is so terrible; we would grow too fond of it!"

So terminated the assault upon Jackson. The fatal charge upon Longstreet, holding Marye's Hill, was now to follow.

The ground has been briefly referred to; let us look at it again. Marye's Hill is west of Fredericksburg, about half a mile distant. Over its abrupt crest runs the Plank Road to Chancellorsville. At its foot comes in from the South the Telegraph Road, skirted here by a low stone wall; and in front of this wall is an open field, and a small stream. The point of "intersection of the Plank Road with the Telegraph Road" was, by Gen. Burnside's order, to be the point of attack for Sumner. Now, this point was the stone wall bristling with infantry, within two hundred yards of the heights crowned with artillery. Above the wall rose a hedge of bayonets; on the hill grinned the bronze mouths of Longstreet's cannon.

To charge that position was desperation or madness. And it was charged.

No sooner had the thunders of the assault upon Jack-

son sunk to silence, than the storm began in front of Longstreet — sudden, frightful, horrible beyond words.

There are events of the war which the historian shrinks from with a sort of a shudder. The odour of death arises from them; they smell of the charnel. That assault upon Marye's Heights was one of those terrible episodes, and God forbid that the present writer should take satisfaction in painting the bloody picture. It was a revel of death that the sun witnessed that day — the spectacle of men rushing madly against musketry and cannon, which hurled them back, and tore them to pieces at every step. Sumner obeyed his fatal order, and charged in column of brigades, and in ten minutes they were nearly annihilated. He charged again with mad courage — for this officer had the blood of the soldier — and was met as before. Not a man reached that fatal, terrible wall. From its summit the long volleys struck the troops in the face, and from the heights above round shot and shell finished the bloody work. When that thunder had ceased, what the eye saw was a great field covered at every step with corpses; within twenty-five yards of the wall, the bravest had thrown up their hands, and lay dead in that attitude.

The assault upon Longstreet had been repulsed like the assault on Jackson.

Then the madness of despair is said to have seized upon Gen. Burnside. He had not witnessed the battle, remaining at his head-quarters, the "Phillips House," a mile or more from the river; but he now mounted his horse, rode down to the banks, dismounted, walked

hurriedly up and down, and, gazing at the ominous heights, which Sumner had just charged, exclaimed:

“That crest must be carried to-night!”

Hooker had been held in reserve on the north bank. He was now ordered to cross and attack. He rode over, looked at the ground, returned at full gallop to Gen. Burnside, and remonstrated.

He was right then; he was not right afterwards in “making out a case,” and as strong a one as possible, against his commander. Gen. Hooker enjoys the disagreeable reputation of having always sought to strike the fallen—to administer the *coup de grace* to his unfortunate comrades when they were staggering under “official” displeasure. Ferocious against McClellan, after his failure at Cold Harbour, he was savage upon Burnside when defeat had overshadowed him at Fredericksburg. Marye’s Hill was an ugly obstacle—Gen. Hooker made it hideous. The stone wall was a barrier. General Hooker made a fortress of it.

Marye’s Hill, he says, was “a mountain of rock.” It was only an ordinary eminence, with artillery to defend it.

The stone wall was “five or six hundred yards” long, with “rifle-pits all along”—“not simply a stone wall, but a support wall,” with “earth between the rifle-pits and the wall;” “to batter down that wall was like battering down the masonry of a fortification;” and “thirty thousand men were massed behind this wall!”

So says Gen. Hooker. Let the reader some day get out of the cars at Fredericksburg, and go and look at this terrible “fortification.” It is a poor little ordinary Virginia stone fence, about eighteen inches thick. It



is there to speak for itself—just as it was, still blackened by the fires kindled on that cold December day of 1862.

The “thirty thousand men,” too, were the product of Gen. Hooker’s imagination. The force which held that wall was Cobb’s brigade, to which were added, during the action, Kershaw’s brigade, and two regiments of Gen. Cooke’s—in all, seventeen hundred men. It was this force simply,\* not thirty thousand men, which was “massed behind that wall of five or six hundred yards.”

The animus of Gen. Hooker is all in one sentence of his report: “Finding that I had lost as many men as my orders required me to lose, I suspended the attack.” Unhappy Gen. Burnside! you were struck while down by your remorseless lieutenant, who was burning to show his superior military genius—at Chancellorsville!

Receiving the order to attack again the fatal heights, Hooker remonstrated, as has been seen, declaring, with justice, that the attack was desperate. Gen. Burnside insisted—a vertigo appeared to have seized upon him. Hooker obeyed, sullenly marshalled his troops, and prepared for the assault, by opening with his artillery upon the dangerous stone wall. His object, he says, was to make “a hole” in it for the entrance of the assaulting column; and the statement is so curious that it can only be explained upon the theory that Gen. Hooker never saw the wall of which he spoke.

The artillery fire continued until nearly sunset, when everything was ready for the second assault. The men

\* Reports Army Northern Virginia, Vol. II., p. 445.

had thrown away their knapsacks, and their guns were unloaded. It was necessary for them to depend entirely upon the bayonet, "for there was no time there to load and fire," says Gen. Hooker. The column of assault was thus formed, the word was given, and the troops dashed forward with hurrahs to storm the wall and the heights.

A few words only are necessary to convey the result. From the wall and the hill came the merciless fusillade once more; the dark masses staggered, then gave way, then retreated swiftly, leaving the ground encumbered with their dead. The charge had lasted "fifteen minutes;" and of four thousand men who went forward to the assault, the bodies of seventeen hundred and sixty were left upon the field.

As Hooker fell back, a threatening roar came from the Confederate right, near Hamilton's crossing; and that sound announced the inception of one of the most daring enterprises ever conceived by the master mind of Jackson. To this let us now give a few words.

Repulsing Meade without difficulty in the morning, Jackson had remained in position upon his wooded crest, waiting all day for a second attack. As the hours passed on, and the enemy only used their artillery, it became obvious that no further assault upon him would be made that day; and that could only result from the fact that their troops were demoralized. What to do? That question never puzzled Jackson long. With the intuition of genius, he understood the whole truth. On the left as on the right — at Marye's as at Hamilton's — the enemy were repulsed and stag-

gering. The thing was now to drive him into the river at the point of the bayonet.

Those who saw Jackson then will never forget his face. His eyes glared, his cheeks glowed, his lips were shut like a vice. In the hurried movements of the man, ordinarily so calm, and in the strident accents of his voice, no less than in his face, could be read the secret of an immense excitement and a fixed and unalterable resolution.

The present writer saw him, and wondered at that unwonted emotion, knowing not what was coming. Near the crossing, one of his staff, well known to me, came at a gallop.

"Are you going to Gen. Stuart?" he said, hurriedly.

"Yes."

"Well, tell him that Gen. Jackson is going to advance and attack the enemy precisely at sunset—he wishes Gen. Stuart to advance his artillery and fire as rapidly as possible, taking care not to injure the troops as they attack."

A glance over the shoulder showed that no time was to be lost. The sun was poised like a red-hot shield upon the Massaponnax woods. In ten minutes Gen. Stuart had Jackson's order.

"Good!" he exclaimed, and in a few moments his guns began to advance, firing furiously at every pause. Thirty peices under Pelham made the great field a sheet of flame in the dusk, and step by step Stuart threw forward his artillery, in face of a destructive fire, until he was near the Port Royal wood, from which Meade had advanced in the morning. But no sound came from Jackson. Stuart was roaring on still,

when a courier came up from one of his generals, asking the news.

"Tell the General I have advanced," he said, "but Jackson has not, and that I am going on crowding 'em with artillery."

As night fell he was right upon the enemy's masses — where was Jackson, and why had he not advanced? That question remains unanswered. Jackson said because the enemy began to fire upon him when he moved, with all their batteries. The army said because an order miscarried; a general lagged; an hour was lost. One thing only is certain — that that grand assault was never made.

What result would have followed it? That is a difficult question; and it is hazardous in military affairs to speculate upon events which never took place.

"From what I knew," says Gen. Franklin, "of our want of success upon the right, and the demoralized condition of the troops upon the right and centre, as represented to me by their commanders, I confess that I believe the order to recross was a very proper one."

Jackson is said to have adhered to his attack with the bayonet: to have urged, in council of war, that the Confederates should strip naked to the waist, make a night assault, and "drive them into the river." He alone seems to have felt, as by intuition, that the *morale* of the Federal army was broken.

And yet Gen. Burnside resolved upon another attempt. Crushed in all but his courage, he ordered the Ninth Corps to be marshaled in column of regiments for an assault on Marye's Hill, led by himself in person, and it was only when his corps commanders besought

him not to slaughter the troops uselessly, that he yielded.

But the army was not withdrawn. All day Sunday and Monday—two whole days after the battle—the troops remained drawn up in the great plain, under the muzzles of Gen. Lee's guns. The indecision of the Federal commander resembled resolution. He seemed determined to attack again. The bands played, the banners rippled, the bugles sounded, the lines were marshaled; then, on Tuesday morning, after a drenching storm in the night, the multitude had disappeared like the phantasmagoria of a dream.

Burnside had recrossed the river, and the campaign had ended.

A town in ruins and still smoking; walls torn with cannon balls; houses near the stone fence—you can see them still—riddled like sieves with musket bullets; dead bodies every where; new-made graves on every side; broken artillery carriages; abandoned flags; women without shelter; children without food; dirt, desolation, blood, and mourning—that was what remained when the Federal army left the south bank of the Rappahannock.

Gen. Burnside had fought one of the bloodiest and most useless battles of history.

## VII.

### CHANCELLORSVILLE.

ONE day in the winter of 1862, Gen. Stuart was talking at "Camp No-Camp," his head-quarters, near Fredericksburg, with a member of his staff.

"Where will the next battle be fought, General?" the staff officer asked.

"Near Chancellorsville," was the reply of Stuart.

And that answer was not guesswork. It was calculation. It was based upon the soundest of all military maxims: "Expect your enemy to do what he ought to do."

War moves as the stars do in their orbits—by law, not by chance. Certain points in a country are strategic as others are not. There was a first battle of Manassas in July, 1861, and a second on the same ground in August, 1862. There was a first battle of Cold Harbor in June, 1862, and a second there in June, 1864. There was a first battle of The Wilderness in May, 1863, and a second there in May, 1864. If ever there is another revolution, and Virginia is again invaded, there will be a third battle of Manassas, of Cold Harbor, and of The Wilderness. The terrain is not chosen—it chooses. Armies do not advance to fight at certain spots of the earth; they are dragged there.

When Gen. Stuart said that Gen. Hooker would

fight at Chancellorsville, he gave the Federal commander credit for military acumen. With Lee at Fredericksburg, Chancellorville was the key position. To hold it was to force the Confederate commander to come out and fight on ground chosen by his adversary, or to retreat. On the last day of April, Gen. Hooker held it; in the first days of May the two armies grappled there.

We have seen the ill-fortune which befell Gen. Burnside at Fredericksburg—a reverse from which that officer did not rise. He made one more attempt to cross the Rappahannock at a ford above the town, but his army stuck in the mud. It was already demoralized. “The soldier no longer thinks it an honor to belong to the Army of the Potomac,” wrote a Federal correspondent. When two of the Northern Generals received Burnside’s order, one said to the other:

“What do you think of it?”

“It don’t seem to have *the ring*,” was the answer.

“No, *the bell is broken*,” replied the first.

Here is a sketch of the army making its last advance:

“At every turn a wagon or caisson could be seen, sticking fast in the mud. In every gully batteries, caissons, supply wagons, ambulances, and pontoons were mired; horses and mules up to their bellies in mud; soldiers on the march sinking to their knees at almost every step. It was impossible to draw an empty wagon through the dreadful mud. The whole army was stuck fast.”

In fact the “bell was broken,” and Gen. Burnside was held responsible. His head fell, and Gen. Joseph Hooker reigned in his stead.

The plan of campaign adopted by the new General was excellent. It was to turn Lee's left flank, attack from that direction, and force him to fight in open field; or fall back upon Richmond. While waiting for the roads to dry sufficiently to admit of the movement of infantry and artillery, a cavalry expedition was resolved upon, whose aim was to cut the Central Railroad, and, if possible, traverse the whole State of North Carolina.

The expedition started about the middle of March, aiming to pass through Culpeper toward Orange. It was commanded by Gen. Averill, an officer of ability, and the force consisted of six regiments of cavalry and a battery. The number was estimated by Gen. Stuart at "three thousand in the saddle."

On the 17th of March, Averill crossed at Kelley's Ford, and was met there by Stuart, with eight hundred men of Fitz Lee, the latter commanding. An obstinate combat followed, which lasted from morning until evening. An eye-witness compared Fitz Lee's little force to a small bull-dog jumping at the throat of a big mastiff—ever shaken off by his powerful adversary, but ever returning to the struggle, until the larger animal's strength was worn out. Such was the actual result. At sunset Averill recrossed the Rappahannock, and gave up his expedition. He had left "the roads strewed with dead men and horses." Stuart telegraphed to Gen. Lee; but side by side with the dead Federalists were some of the bravest men of the Southern cavalry. Pelham fell here leading a charge—the exact death he would have chosen. That alone was worth the expedition.



The first move of Gen. Hooker had thus "come to grief," but greater events were on the march. By diligent attention, he had thoroughly reorganized his army, checked desertion, broken bad officers, promoted good ones, re-equipped the whole force, and made of the machine broken to pieces at Fredericksburg, a powerful and complete war-engine, which promised to crush everything in its path.

This force consisted of seven army corps, numbering in all, say Federal official reports, one hundred and twenty thousand infantry and artillery, twelve thousand cavalry, and more than four hundred guns; with this, it was hoped by the authorities at Washington that Gen. Hooker would be able to overwhelm his opponent, Gen. Lee.

Lee had remained at Fredericksburg, with small bodies posted opposite the upper fords, in the vicinity of Chancellorsville. In April, only a portion of his army was present—Longstreet had been sent on an expedition to Suffolk, on the south side of James River, and had no part in the great combats of the wilderness. Lee's force on the Rappahannock was thus dangerously small. It amounted in all to about forty-thousand infantry, and seven thousand cavalry and artillery.\*

\* "Our strength at Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg:

|                                     |          |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Anderson and McLaws.....            | 13,000   |
| Jackson (Hill, Rodes, Trimble)..... | 21,000   |
| Early (Fredericksburg).....         | 6,000    |
|                                     | <hr/>    |
|                                     | 40,000   |
| Cavalry and artillery.....          | 7,000    |
|                                     | <hr/>    |
|                                     | 47,000 " |

— *MS. of Col. Walter H. Taylor, A. A. G. of the Army.*

The opposing armies thus numbered respectively one hundred and thirty-two thousand, and forty-seven thousand of all arms of the service; that is, nearly three to one.

The plan of Gen. Hooker, as we have said, was admirable. Three of his army corps, under Gen. Sedgwick, were to make a feint of crossing at Fredericksburg, while with the other three the commanding General, in person, would cross the upper Rappahannock into Culpeper, advance to the Rapidan, pass over that river, and push on to Chancellorsville. Then the last of his army corps—Couch's Second Corps—would cross at United States Ford, thus uncovered; Sedgwick would return to the north bank at Fredericksburg, march up the river, and pass again to the south bank at United States Ford—thus Hooker's whole army would be massed near Chancellorsville, directly upon the flank of his adversary.

And this was not all. While the infantry thus advanced to the great grapple of decisive battle, the cavalry was to co-operate. Ten thousand horsemen, under Stoneman, were to pass through Culpeper, cross the Rapidan, near Raccoon Ford, push on for Gordonsville, destroy the Central and Fredericksburg Railroads in the rear of Lee; and, by thus cutting off communication with Richmond, prevent Longstreet's coming up, and starve the Southern army. If bayonets and cannon did not do the work, want of bread and meat would, and Lee would certainly be checkmated or destroyed. "Man proposes—God disposes."

In the last days of April, Gen. Hooker began to move. Never had a more imposing army shaken the

earth of the western World with its tread. From the forests of the Rappahannock emerged what seemed endless columns of troops, bristling with bayonets; banners waved, bugles sounded, the wheels of four hundred pieces of artillery, and the hoofs of twelve thousand horses, startled the bleak fields of Culpeper, just emerging from the snows of winter. Hooker crossed the Rappahannock at Kelley's ford on canvass pontoons, drove Stuart's small cavalry force before him, as the whirlwind sweeps the dry leaves, and pushed on steadily to the Rapidan, which his column waded through, all night, by the glare of bonfires—the water up to the men's shoulders.

*Pari passu*, the great cavalry column had moved across Culpeper. With ten thousand horsemen, Gen. Stoneman made straight for Gordonsville, opposed only by a few hundred men, under William H. F. Lee, for the stout cavalier Stuart had other work before him. He was hanging on the front and flanks of Hooker, harassing, impeding, watching him, and sending courier after courier with intelligence to Gen. Lee, at Fredericksburg. Thus Stoneman had in front of him only a handful of opponents—a fly easy to brush away, it would seem. And, in truth, young Gen. Lee had to fight and fall back. He could do no more against Stoneman's ten thousand, and the great invading column of blue horsemen hastened on, penetrating into the very heart of Virginia, south of the Rapidan.

On Thursday, then, the last day of April, this was the situation: Hooker approaching Chancellorsville, with four infantry corps—for Couch had crossed at United States Ford—his great force of cavalry driv-

ing forward, like a sword's point, into the heart of the State; Sedgwick threatening at Fredericksburg with three more corps of infantry; Lee waiting, with his forty thousand, for the enemy to fully develope their intentions.

Stuart, falling back, and fighting step by step, day and night, through the "Wilderness," had at once divined the plan of Hooker. He had predicted truly. The tenor of every dispatch which he sent to Lee was, "They are massing, and mean to fight near Chancellorsville."

So, on this night of Thursday, everything went admirably for Gen. Hooker. He swam with the stream. Never was commander more joyous. He could not conceal from his officers the delight which he experienced. He was radiant, and victory hovered in the air for him.

"The rebel army," he exclaimed to those around him, "is now the legitimate property of the Army of the Potomac! They may as well pack up their haversacks, and make for Richmond!—and I shall be after them!"

To his troops, he said in a general order:

"The enemy must either ingloriously fly, or come out from behind his defences, and give us battle on our own ground, where certain destruction awaits him!"

There were those of his officers, doubtless, who listened thoughtfully, rather than with enthusiasm, to these juvenile ebullitions. At Cold Harbor, Manassas, Sharpsburg, and Fredericksburg, they had felt the sword's point of the silent cavalier, in the grey cape, commanding the Southern army. That obstinately cool

personage was still at Fredericksburg, had not issued any orders in reference to "packing haversacks;" seemed resolved to stand stubbornly, instead of "flying ingloriously;" and did not yet appear to regard his good old army as "the legitimate property of the Army of the Potomac." In fact, his movements were astonishingly opposed to such an idea. The Telegraph Road, southward from Fredericksburg, was an excellent highway of retreat; but Lee seemed to be ignorant of its existence; Stoneman's ten thousand were streaming on to cut his communications, but he appeared wholly unaware of the fact. Hooker was closing in upon him, with that enormous cordon, but the eyes of the old lion, thus caught in the battue, were never clearer or more serene. Did he despise his adversary? Did he reflect that to wrap a cord around a sword-blade is as dangerous to the cord as to the sword? There is a grand "reciprocity" in war.

"General," an officer said to Hoke, that brave North Carolinian, at Cold Harbor, "the Yankees are very near you, yonder!"

"Not nearer," replied Hoke, "than I am to them!"

That Lee regarded the situation at Chancellorsville much as Hoke did that at Cold Harbor, is proved by the fact that his first step was to lessen the distance between himself and his adversary. He did not retreat; he went to offer Hooker battle in the Wilderness.

Let us look at this ground where "certain destruction awaited" the leader of the Confederates. Hooker had halted in the Wilderness, not far from Chancellorsville, — a curious spot in a curious country. Vir-

ginia has no locality stranger than that sombre "Wilderness." There all is wild, desolate, and lugubrious. Thicket, undergrowth and jungle stretch for miles, impenetrable and untouched. Narrow roads wind on forever between melancholy masses of stunted and gnarled oak, and the hiss of the moccasin in the ooze is echoed by the weird cry of the whipperwill, lost in the shadowy depths of the wood. Little sunlight shines there. The face of nature is dreary and sad. It was so before the battle; it is not more cheerful to-day, when, as you ride along, you see fragments of shell, rotting knapsacks, rusty gun-barrels, bleached bones, and grinning skulls.

Into this jungle Gen. Hooker penetrated. It was the wolf in his den, ready to tear any one who approached. A battle there seemed impossible. Neither side could see its antagonist. Artillery could not move; cavalry could not operate; the very infantry had to flatten their bodies to glide between the stunted trunks. That an army of one hundred and twenty thousand men should have chosen that spot to fight forty thousand; and not only chosen it, but made it a hundred times more impenetrable by felling trees, erecting breastworks, disposing artillery, *en masse*, to sweep every road and bridle path which led to Chancellorsville, — this fact seemed incredible.

What did Gen. Hooker mean by, "I will be after them," — that is, the Confederate army? He did not seem to be "after them," thus dead-locked in the Chancellorsville thicket. The sudden roar of artillery from the side of Fredericksburg, reverberating grimly in the

tangled depths of the thickets, seemed to indicate that the Confederates were "after" *him*!

That sullen thunder began on Friday afternoon, the day after the arrival of the Federal army at Chancellorsville. Up to that moment Gen. Hooker's plans had been admirable, and were executed with the skill and promptness which compel the eagles of victory to perch upon the standards of an army. The whole programme, conceived by Hooker in his tent, had been translated into action by his excellent Lieutenants. Stoneman was near the Central Railroad; Sedgwick was threatening to cross at Fredericksburg, and holding Lee there. Hooker was rooted at Chancellorsville, in an absolute fortress, and two of his army corps had pushed forward on the road to Fredericksburg to meet Lee, if he advanced.

There was the place to fight, not in the jungle; and every consideration of military science demanded that Hooker should mass and deliver battle there. The country was open, rolling, — a great plateau whereon troops of all arms could be manœuvred. The spot held on Friday afternoon was well out on the road to Fredericksburg, and virtually commanded Banks's ford, by which Gen. Sedgwick could cross the river, and thus make the whole army a unit. One march during Friday night would have effected that; on the morning of Saturday, Gen. Hooker's one hundred and twenty thousand men and four hundred guns would have been drawn up on that commanding position, before half of Lee's force could have arrived.

We are not criticising Gen. Hooker for the pleasure of criticising him. Look at the map. A beardless

cadet would have stayed there, hurried up Sedgwick, massed the army, and fought where numbers could be manœuvred and made to tell. Hooker ordered the two corps to fall back to Chancellorsville; gave no reasons when his officers remonstrated; he had decided to fight in the jungle.

From the moment when the plateau was abandoned, everything was changed. Good fortune deserted Gen. Hooker, or rather, he repulsed it. He threw away the pearl, and the mailed hand of Lee caught it as it fell.

The Confederate commander had discovered everything now, and his resolution was formed in a moment. Sedgwick's attack on Fredericksburg was seen to be a mere feint. The real assault was on the Confederate left from above; and, leaving only about six thousand men at Fredericksburg, Lee advanced to give battle to Hooker.

Jackson, commanding the advance force, had already moved up, reaching Tabernacle Church, a few miles from Chancellorsville, on Friday. There he struck up against the two corps which had advanced to the plateau, and attacked them, but effected little. Still, it was in consequence of this attack from the head of Lee's column that Hooker recalled his troops, and concentrated his whole force in the Wilderness.

At night Lee arrived. A counsel of war was held. Jackson had seen at a glance that a front attack upon Hooker was an impossibility in his impregnable position, and the result of the consultation was the great movement against the Federal right.

*The* movement, we say, — not *a* movement. Whoever has heard of the battle of Chancellorsville has



heard of that gigantic blow which the hand of Jackson struck just before the mighty arm was paralyzed. The last exhibition of his military genius, it was, perhaps, the greatest and most glorious. So heavy and mortal was the stroke which he delivered, that the noise of it echoed throughout the world.

At dawn Jackson was moving to accomplish his design, with about half Lee's force—twenty-one thousand men; with the remnant Lee would make demonstrations on the enemy's front and left, while the great plan was struck at his right.

From this moment until Sunday, the chief interest of the battle of Chancellorsville concentrates upon Jackson.

A word is necessary to explain clearly Hooker's position. He was drawn up near Chancellorsville, protected by heavy earthworks, resembling the two sides of a square. One side—the right wing—fronted south; the other side—the left wing—fronted nearly east, covering the Old Turnpike and Plank Road, running from Fredericksburg westward. This order of battle was evidently formed on the supposition that, coming from Fredericksburg, Lee would either attack his left or his front; it was not supposed possible that the Confederate commander, with his small army, would venture a movement so audacious as an assault against his opponent's *right and rear*.

And yet that was precisely the move determined upon. It was hazardous; it was more than hazardous—reckless. But forty thousand men opposed to one hundred and twenty thousand, are obliged to be reckless. For the rest there was one element of the

problem which counted for much. The attacking column was led by Jackson.

One of the military maxims of this soldier was, "mystery is the secret of success." The movement now to be made was defeated, if discovered; from the moment when Gen. Hooker divined the scheme, all was lost. Not the day only—the army also. Lee was dividing his small force in face of overwhelming numbers; that fact known, he was gone, or ought to have been.

Jackson's aim was thus to deceive the enemy completely—to elude his vigilance, and fall like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, when it is least expected. He had to pass through the woods across the entire Federal front, attain their right flank unawares, and overwhelm it before it could make any resistance.

He set out at dawn, moving obliquely from the Plank Road, and gaining ground toward the South. On his right flank and in front moved Stuart with Fitz Lee's cavalry, masking the movement, and driving off Federal scouting parties. Along the narrow country road, lost in the dense forest, the infantry tramped on steadily and in silence.

At the "Furnace," a mile or two from Hooker's front, the movement seemed discovered. An attack was made on the rear of the column, and a whole regiment captured. Jackson ordered a portion of his artillery to take position, and open fire. This was done. Then he moved on, as if nothing had taken place.

But what ought to have been a very fatal circumstance had happened. Gen. Hooker had seen him;

cavalry, infantry, artillery, all were seen; how then the success of the surprise?

We cannot answer that question.

When Gen. Hooker was testifying before the War Committee afterwards, he said that he had discovered Jackson's intended assault on his right, and had provided against it; it had succeeded because his orders were disobeyed.\* But pen and ink are terrible things! On Saturday afternoon, just when Jackson was about to strike the mortal blow at his right, Gen. Hooker wrote Sedgwick:

"We know the enemy *is flying, trying to save his trains*"!†

The fact appears to be that Gen. Hooker was completely deceived. The road near the Furnace bends southward, and Jackson's movement did resemble a retreat. It was the recoil of the arm when about to strike. Lee's great Lieutenant advanced without pausing, attained the Brock Road, running from Spottsylvania Court-House to the Rapidan, struck into it, and reached the Orange Plank Road two or three miles west of Chancellorsville. There, accompanied by Fitz Lee, Jackson rode up on a hill, and saw the enemy's line just in front. He was not yet far enough.

"Tell my column to cross that road," he said to an aid, pointing to the Plank Road. His object was to gain the Old Turnpike beyond, from which he would

\* Hooker. — "My instructions were utterly and criminally disregarded."—Cond. of War, I., 127.

† Conduct of War, Vol. I., p. 95.

be able to descend straight upon the flank and rear of the enemy.

Rapidly reaching the desired point, Jackson hastened to form order of battle. He placed Rodes in front, Colston, commanding Trimble's division, behind the first line, and A. P. Hill's division in reserve. The enemy had not discovered him. The twenty-one thousand men had moved as though shod with the "shoes of silence." At about five in the evening the line swept forward through the thicket, with a sudden storm of cheers, which shook the forest. They were soon upon the enemy—surprised, demoralized, unnerved from the first by this sudden and terrible onslaught. Before the tornado, nothing stood. Rodes stormed the works in front of him, passed over them, drove the entire Eleventh corps, who were cooking their suppers, from their frying-pans and coffee-pots,\* and pursued them with yells down the road, and through the thicket, toward Chancellorsville. Colston had rushed in behind, passing over the works with Rodes; the enemy had been dashed to pieces by these two divisions, and were struck with panic—the Dutch soldiers yelling—artillery smashing against trees, and overturning as it went off at a gallop—the whole corps fleeing wildly before the avenging Nemesis upon their heels.

"Throw your men into the breach!" exclaimed Gen. Hooker, galloping up, and addressing an officer,

\* "Their arms were stacked, and the men were away from them, and scattered about for the purpose of cooking their suppers."  
—Hooker, *Conduct of War*, I. p. 127.

“receive the enemy on your bayonets — don’t fire a shot, they can’t see you!”

But the injunction was too late to prevent the reverse. The entire corps holding the right wing of the Federal army was doubled up and crushed back — a huddled mass of fugitives — on their centre, near Chancellorsville. So great a blow had Jackson struck, from that quarter whence it was so little expected.

The effect of it is described by Northern writers who were present. Little blood had been shed, but Gen. Hooker had better have lost ten thousand men. His own countrymen say that this sudden overthrow of the 11th Corps shook the nerve of the army — that it had a fatal effect upon the *morale* of all. If this be untrue, no explanation remains of the astounding success of Stuart’s attack on the next morning. Not a man had reinforced the original column of Jackson, and it drove before it the whole right wing of Gen. Hooker’s army — his force numbering ninety-eight thousand men.\*

Is further proof needed of the effect of that great blow? Take the statement of a Northern writer:

“During the night [of Saturday, after Jackson’s attack,] the engineers had traced out a new line, three-quarters of a mile to the rear of Chancellorsville, towards the river, and covering the roads to United States and Ely’s Fords.”

\* Renolds’s Corps was withdrawn from Sedgwick on Saturday, and reached Chancellorsville that night, leaving only twenty-two thousand men with Sedgwick. This made Hooker’s force, at Chancellorsville ninety-eight thousand, the force attacked on Sunday morning.

Gen. Hooker had been driven already. To this "new line" he retreated at eleven next day.†

Night fell as Jackson continued to press the Federal right wing on Chancellorsville. He approached now the end of his great life. Death's skeleton finger was stretched out to touch him in mid-career; but the lamp so soon to be extinguished burned with a light more dazzling than ever before. Jackson's original attack was daring; his scheme now had in it something superb, and worthy the last hours of a great leader. It was nothing else than to extend his left, sweep across the roads which led to the Rappahannock, and cut off Hooker's entire army.

With about twenty thousand men, he was going to place himself in the path of nearly one hundred thousand, and say, "Surrender, or you are dead!"

He never did so. His last hour was near. He had ordered his lines to be dressed for the final advance—Rodes and Colston to yield the front, giving place to Hill's fresh troops—and now rode down the turnpike towards Chancellorsville, less than a mile distant. It was a strange locality, a strange scene, and a strange night. Upon the dusky thickets skirting the road, the moon, wading through clouds, threw a misty and sombre light. The woods were full of moving figures, which resembled phantoms; the whippoorwills cried from the undergrowth; not a gun was heard; and from Chancellorsville came only a confused hum and murmur.

Jackson, with his staff, rode forward to reconnoitre,

† *Conduct of the War*. I., 127.

and stopped in the road listening. Then suddenly a gun was fired in the thicket—and at that sound the troops clutched and leveled their weapons. Jackson turned to ride back; but had scarcely done so when a volley was fired upon him by his own men from the right. He turned to gallop into the thicket on the left, and then came the fatal stroke. The men there had been ordered to guard against Federal calvary, and they took Jackson's party for cavalry. Kneeling on the right knee, they fired upon him at less than thirty paces: wounded him mortally, and his horse wheeling round, darted violently under a bough, which struck him in the face, tore his cap off, and nearly dragged him from the saddle. But he caught the bridle with the bleeding fingers through which a bullet had torn; guided the animal into the road, and there fell into the arms of one of his staff officers, who laid him upon the earth. The firing had ceased as suddenly as it had begun, but it had been fatal to many. Some were dead, some wounded, some carried by their frightened horses into the enemy's lines—one officer was shot dead, his horse ran off, and the corpse, with the feet still in the stirrups, was dragged to Chancellorsville. The dead "went fast" there!

Jackson was borne to the rear, in the midst of a veritable hurricane of shell and canister which the enemy directed upon the road from their epaulements in front of Chancellorsville. On his way to the rear, Gen. Pender met him, and expressed the apprehension that he would be compelled to fall back from his position. Jackson's eye flashed.

“You must hold your ground, Gen. Pender!” he exclaimed, “you must hold your ground, sir!”

That was the last order of Stonewall Jackson on the field. Ten days afterwards he was dead.

Among his last words had been, “A. P. Hill, prepare for action!”

That is to say, his last thought upon earth was his great design that night in the Wilderness woods. Hill’s fresh men were to make the great movement aiming to cut off Hooker from the river; and in his dying hours Jackson murmured:

“If I had not been wounded, or had had one more hour of daylight, I would have cut off the enemy from the road to United States Ford—we would have had them entirely surrounded would have been obliged to surrender or cut their way out—they had no other alternative!”

But the great arm was paralyzed, the fiery brain chilled, and Hill, second in command, had also been wounded, nearly at the same moment with Jackson. The scheme was thus abandoned, and one of the most wonderful tableaux in military history lost—that of twenty-thousand “cutting off” one hundred thousand.

Jackson had thus disappeared. The corps which he had led to victory was without a head. Who was to grasp the baton of the great Marshal of Lee, as it fell from the bleeding hand? Lying faint and pale on his litter, Jackson’s thoughts turned to Stuart, who had gone with his cavalry to attack a Federal camp on the road to Ely’s ford. Stuart was just about to open his assault when a message reached him. He came back at full gallop through the darkness, and Hill, wounded,



turned over the command of the corps to him. Jackson was some miles in the rear now, at Wilderness Tavern, and Stuart—prevented by the exigences of the hour from going to him—sent to ask his plans and dispositions.

“Go back to Gen. Stuart,” murmured Jackson, “and tell him to act upon his own judgment and do what he thinks best; I have implicit confidence in him.”

Stuart then took command in person, marshaled his lines, and made every preparation for a renewal of the assault at dawn. The infantry, long used to the quiet and slow-moving figure of Stonewall Jackson, in his old dingy uniform, were now startled by the appearance of the young cavalier, with his floating plume and vivacious movements, galloping to and fro, with his drawn sabre gleaming in the moonlight. Whatever they may have thought of him as an infantry leader, they knew that there was fight in him, and all prepared for a hard struggle.

Before daylight Stuart was ready. It was not necessary to await an express order from Lee. There was one thing, and one thing only to do—to attack at dawn.

All the evening, during Jackson’s attack, Lee had thundered against the enemy’s front, as a diversion. The intelligence of his great Lieutenant’s complete success, and of his fall, came at the same moment. Lee’s grief was poignant, and he murmured, “I have lost my right arm!”

The messenger, bringing the information, added that Jackson had intended to “press the enemy on Sunday.”

At these words, Gen. Lee rose from the straw on which he was lying, wrapped in his blanket, under a breadth of canvass, and exclaimed, with glowing cheeks:

“These people shall be pressed to-day.”

It was then past midnight. At dawn, Stuart advanced to the assault; the forces of Anderson and McLaws at the same moment attacking the enemy's front.

Stuart's assault with infantry had in it the rush and impetus of his cavalry charge. Leading his line in person, with drawn sabre and floating plume, he resembled, said one who saw him, the dead Henry of Navarre, plunging amid the smoke of Ivry. But even in this moment of decisive struggle, when the two great armies had grappled in that mortal wrestle, the spirit of wild gayety, which fired Stuart's blood in action, only flamed out more superbly. At the head of the great corps of Jackson, and leading the decisive charge in a pitched battle against triple lines of breastworks, bristling with infantry and cannon, Stuart's sonorous voice was heard singing, “Old Joe Hooker, will you come out of the Wilderness!”

There was another sound which had in it something more tragic and menacing, as it vibrated above the thunder of the guns. That was the shout of ten thousand voices, as the lines rushed together:

“Remember Jackson!”

Driven headlong, as it were, by that burning thought of their great leader lying faint and bleeding, not far from them, the men resembled furies. Nothing stopped them. The Federal artillery ploughed gaps through them — they closed up and continued to rush forward.

The colours were struck down; as they fell, quick hands seized them, and again they floated and were borne on. Whole regiments fired away their last rounds of cartridges; but they stood and met death, falling where they faced the enemy, or continued to advance as before. This is not the statement of a Southern writer only.

“From the large brick house which gives the name to this vicinity,” says a writer of the North, “the enemy could be seen sweeping slowly but confidently, determinedly, and surely, through the clearings which extended in front. Nothing could excite more admiration for the qualities of the veteran soldier, than the manner in which the enemy swept out, as they moved steadily onward, the forces which were opposed to them. We say it reluctantly, and for the first time, that the enemy have shown the finest qualities, and we acknowledge, on this occasion, their superiority in the open field to our own men. They delivered their fire with precision, and were apparently inflexible and immovable under the storm of bullets and shell which they were constantly receiving. Coming to a piece of timber, which was occupied by a division of our own men, half the number were detailed to clear the woods. It seemed certain that here they would be repulsed, but they marched right through the wood, driving our own soldiers out, who delivered their fire and fell back, halted again, fired and fell back as before, seeming to concede to the enemy, as a matter of course, the superiority which they evidently felt themselves. Our own men fought well. There was no lack of courage, but an evident feeling that they were destined to be beaten,

and the only thing for them to do was to fire and retreat."

Stuart pressed straight on. At the same time the force under Gen. Lee in person, on the right, was thrown vigorously against the Federal front. In the lugubrious thickets all the thunders seemed unloosed. The moment had come when, breast to breast, the antagonists were to grapple in the death struggle.

Stuart decided the event speedily by one of those conceptions which show the possession of military genius. There were many in the Southern army who said that he was "only a cavalry officer." After this morning, he could claim to be "an artillery officer," too. On the right of his line was a hill, which his quick eye had soon discovered; and this was plainly the key of the position. Stuart massed there about thirty pieces of artillery, and opened all at once a heavy fire upon the Federal centre.

That fire decided the event. Before that hurricane striking their centre, the Federal line began to waver and lose heart. Gen. Slocum sent word to Gen. Hooker that his front was being swept away — he must be reinforced.

"I cannot make soldiers or ammunition!" was the sullen reply of Hooker, who, stationed at the Chancellorsville House, witnessed the battle.

Soon afterwards, a cannon ball struck a pillar of the porch upon which he stood; it crashed down, and Gen. Hooker was stunned, and temporarily disabled. He was borne off, and had hardly disappeared when his lines gave way.

Then followed a spectacle in which the horrors of

war seemed to culminate. The forest was on fire—the Chancellorsville House on fire. From the forest rose quick tongues of flame—from the windows of the houses spouted dense columns of smoke, swept away by the wind. In the depths of those thickets, dead bodies were being consumed, and wounded men were being burned to death. Fire, smoke, blood, uproar—triumphant cheers and dying groans were mingled. In front were the Confederates pressing on with shouts of “Remember Jackson!”—retreating rapidly towards the river, were the defeated forces of Gen. Hooker. Anderson and McLaws had connected now with Stuart’s right—and at ten o’clock Chancellorsville was in Lee’s possession.

The enemy had disappeared. They had fallen back rapidly to a second line in rear. Here heavy earth-works, with arms stretching out towards the two rivers, had been thrown up, to protect the army from another assault. To a pass so desperate had the Federal General come! With his one hundred thousand men, he was retreating before Lee’s thirty or forty thousand, who pushed him to the wall.

And yet a singular dispatch was sent by him, on the *afternoon* of the same day, to Sedgwick:

“I have *driven the enemy*, and all that is wanted is for you to come up and complete Lee’s destruction.”\*

To a cool observer, it would have seemed that Lee was about to complete Hooker’s. His right and left wings were now united; he presented to the enemy an unbroken front, along the Old Turnpike, facing north-

\* Swinton’s “Army of the Potomac,” p. 306.

ward—and the signal for a renewal of the assault trembled on Lee's lips. It was not uttered. News came which checked it. Gen. Sedgwick, with his twenty-two thousand men, had crossed the river at Fredericksburg; assaulted Marye's hill, which was held by artillery, and a few regiments; carried the heights in spite of desperate resistance from the Confederates, who fought, hand to hand, over their guns, for the crest—then, driving the six thousand men of Early and Barksdale before him, Gen. Sedgwick pushed westward over the Plank Road towards Chancellorsville.

Hooker charged all his woes on the delay of Sedgwick—that of course. Yet the blow was well struck, and quickly struck. "It was about eleven o'clock in the morning when he carried the heights," said Sedgwick; and those heights were Marye's hill, which Hooker himself, on the 13th December, 1862, had not been able to carry at all. At that time he described them as a "fortification," "masonry," a "mountain of rock"—all that was impregnable. The stone wall at the foot of them was an insurmountable obstacle, he said, which no artillery could make "a breach" in—no infantry could storm. His own attack, Gen. Hooker informed the War Committee, had been resolute and stubborn, but the place was impregnable. Now, when Sedgwick, that good soldier, took an hour to storm it, he "failed in a prompt compliance with my orders," and "in my judgment, Gen. Sedgwick did not obey the spirit of my order." \*

\* Hooker, in *Conduct of the War*, I., 130-1.

At least he stormed the famous heights ; drove the Confederates before him ; advanced straight on Chancellorsville ; and at the moment when Lee was about to crush Hooker, or drive him into the river, the news came that Sedgwick was near Salem, a few miles from him, advancing rapidly to attack his flank and rear.

It is hard to read the unprinted pages of the Book of Fate. All military speculation goes for what it is worth, only. But, to a fair critic, it would seem that the presence of *Sedgwick*, there and then, saved *Hooker* from "destruction," and deserved something very different from denunciation.

Thus Lee was compelled to forego for the moment his attack. Wilcox's brigade, at Banks's Ford, threw itself in Sedgwick's front, and Lee detached a division to reinforce it. Thus Hooker, for the time, could draw his breath and get ready — Sedgwick had saved him.

Monday dawned, and found the armies in a curious position. Hooker forced back on the Rappahannock ; Lee about to attack him ; Sedgwick advancing to attack Lee ; Early again holding the Fredericksburg heights in Sedgwick's rear.

Thus Sedgwick was posted between Lee and Early ; Lee between Sedgwick and Hooker. What would follow ?

Before Monday night that question was decided. At six in the evening, Lee threw himself upon Sedgwick at Salem heights, closed in in stubborn battle with that resolute opponent ; forced him back ; and at nightfall drove him across the river at Banks's Ford, where a pontoon had been laid to assist his retreat. Short

work had thus been made of the twenty-two thousand. They were routed, flying — over their heads, as they hurried across the river, burst the Southern shell, and the hiss of bullets hastened them. On Tuesday, Lee returned towards Chancellorsville, to finish Hooker.

That commander seemed now completely demoralized. Sedgwick defeated, he determined to recross the Rappahannock, and abandon the whole campaign. And yet that determination was strange. His force still more than doubled that of his adversary. Lee's loss had been ten thousand, leaving him in all thirty thousand. Hooker's loss had been seventeen thousand, leaving him in all one hundred and three thousand. With Sedgwick brought over the river on Tuesday, as he might have been, Gen. Hooker was still able to confront thirty thousand men with one hundred thousand.

Those were the respective numbers of the two armies on Tuesday, the 5th of May — about three to one. It is true that the thirty thousand were flushed with victory, and the one hundred thousand demoralized with defeat. The cavalry, which were hardly engaged, are omitted in these estimates.

His own countrymen declared that Gen. Hooker was the most hopeless individual in the whole army. He seemed painfully to lack the *mens æqua in arduis*, that first of all military traits. He was going to retreat.

Retreat? He who had foretold the "certain destruction" of his adversary, unless he "ingloriously fled!" Who had said that the Army of Northern Virginia "might as well pack up their knapsacks" — that they were "now on the legitimate property of the



Army of the Potomac?" Who had coolly described Lee's army as made up of a "rank and file vastly inferior to our own intellectually and physically!"\* This officer *retreat*, when he had still three to one! When only thirty thousand men confronted one hundred thousand, "intellectually and physically" superior to them! The thing was incredible.

Yet so it was. To the remonstrances of his brave officers, Gen. Hooker replied by erecting a great crescent-shaped earthwork, three miles long, from river to river, in the bend, and by laying his pontoons, on which pine boughs were strewed to prevent the rumble of artillery wheels.

This was done on Tuesday night. When Lee advanced on Wednesday morning to administer the *coup de grace*, his adversary had disappeared. He had left behind him fourteen pieces of artillery, twenty thousand stand of arms, his dead and his wounded.

On the next day Gen. Hooker issued a general order to the troops, in which he said:

"The Major-General commanding tenders to his army his congratulations on its achievements of the last seven days. . . . The events of the last week may well cause the heart of every officer and soldier of the army to swell with pride. We have added new laurels to our former renown."

Does the reader imagine that we have made a slight mistake and quoted Gen. Lee's order instead of Gen. Hooker's? No — Gen. Hooker wrote that! Such was the battle of Chancellorsville. It is only necessary to add that the cavalry expedition under Gen. Stoneman

\* Gen. Hooker's Statement. Cond. of War.

effected almost nothing; and his horsemen, pursued and harrassed by Gen. W. H. F. Lee, hastened back and recrossed the Rappahannock.

The great struggle was thus over. The large army of Gen. Hooker had retreated beyond the Rappahannock, demoralized and shattered. Victory hovered above the Confederates in the tangled thickets of the Wilderness. But alas! the greatest of the Southern soldiers had fallen.

Jackson was dying—soon he was dead. When the wave of death swept over that great standard-bearer, and carried him away, the red flag began to sink in the stormy waters. Inch by inch it went under—at Gettysburg, Spottsylvania, and Petersburg. At Appomattox Court House it disappeared beneath the waves.

That was spared the great soul, who had never seen it droop.

When he fell on that moonlight night in the Wilderness, it was floating still!

## VIII.

### GETTYSBURG.

THERE are spots of the earth's surface, over which the Angel of Death seems to hover. Of these is the town of Gettysburg, in Pennsylvania—unknown in the month of June, 1863, but in July famous as that other insignificant hamlet of Waterloo, in July, 1815.

“Gettysburg! Gettysburg!”—that is a cry which has escaped from many a bleeding heart. And the hearts which bled most have been Southern hearts. For here, not only was the most precious blood of the South poured out like water—here the fate of her great sovereignties was decided. Gettysburg determined, for long years to come, at least, the destiny of the North American Continent. Here was the real end of the great struggle, not at Appomattox. On the slopes of Round Top and Cemetery Hills, those two Titans, the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac, so long warring on each other, grappled in a life and death wrestle. And the Southern Enceladus was thrown. The fall broke his strength. All the movements of the giant thereafter were the mere tossings and writhings of the great body, weighed down by the mountain pressing on it. When Longstreet was thrown back from Round Top, and the Vir-

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ginians under Pickett dashed themselves in pieces vainly against Cemetery Hill, all was over.

Let us be understood. The Army of Northern Virginia was not shattered. In July as in June, Lee had an army and a powerful and unbroken one. The tempered steel of that great weapon could stand more than Gettysburg; and the proof is, that after the fight, Meade, that hardy soldier, kept beyond its sweep. The question was not of the army's *morale* from that time forward, but of the *country's*. Why this access of despair? Was it want of confidence in the Executive and heads of Departments? Was it a conviction of mismanagement, ill-judgment, partiality in the civil rulers? Was it loss of faith in God, and their own resources? Let history answer. The fact remains. Lee's army of seventy thousand at Gettysburg, in June, 1863, was cut down to forty thousand in Spottsylvania, in May, 1864. It did not reach the last named number when from the fifty miles of earthworks pressed by Grant at Petersburg, Lee vainly besought the government for "more men, more men!"

Thus Gettysburg is one of those great combats which sum up and terminate an epoch. Let us see what led to it, and how it was fought.

Hooker, overwhelmed at Chancellorsville, and driven back over the river, the Federal arms seemed paralyzed, at least for the time. Everything prompted a movement of the Southern army northward. The country was in a blaze of enthusiasm; the army regarded itself as invincible; the authorities at Richmond greeted each other with smiles; when Lee sent thither for rations, the Commissary-General, in high good humor,

or laboring under a grand conception, endorsed, it is said, on the requisition, "If Gen. Lee wishes rations, let him seek them in Pennsylvania."

Lee obeyed the wish of the country. Chancellorsville was fought on the third day of May,—on the third day of June, the army of Northern Virginia was on the road to Gettysburg.

Let us look at the great chess-board, and endeavor to comprehend the "situation" and the plans of Lee. Hooker was on the Rappahannock, and it was desirable to draw him out of Virginia. This could only be done by advancing to invade the North. By moving through the gaps of the Blue Ridge, toward the Potomac, Lee would accomplish one of two things,—he would force Hooker to follow him, or compel that commander to advance upon Richmond. If he adopted the latter alternative, Lee would be in his rear; could move upon Washington; and, to use his own expression, "swap queens,"—one capital for the other. This bold move was not anticipated, however. Hooker would fall back under orders from his government to protect the Federal capital. Then Lee, still advancing, would draw him into Maryland, into Pennsylvania. Then, Beauregard was to hasten forward to Culpeper Court House,\* and threaten Washington, diverting a portion of Hooker's troops from the Army of the Potomac for its protection,—or that whole army. If a portion, then Lee would fight his opponent at a disadvantage.

\* This portion of Lee's plan was revealed in the dispatch from President Davis, on the person of the courier captured at Hagerstown, on the 2d of July.

If the whole army, then Harrisburg, Philadelphia, perhaps, would fall.

Then a treaty of peace, — a document such as the world had never seen before, — an agreement consisting of one article only :

“Let us alone, and we will let you alone!”

Such, it would seem, were the plans of Gen. Lee in June, 1863; such the splendid prize which lured him on to that magnificent march. It will live in history as one of the greatest in the annals of war. Let us, therefore, follow the steps of the Confederate commander, from the first movement of his infantry into Culpeper to his appearance at the head of sixty-seven thousand bayonets in front of Gettysburg.

About to move, Lee ordered a review of Stuart's cavalry. It took place in a plain not far from Brandy Station, and the horsemen charged, shouts resounded, the artillery roared in mimic battle as the troopers, sword in hand, rushed upon it, — beneath a great pole from which floated the Confederate banner, Gen. Lee, calm and silent, sat his horse, looking on.

No sooner had the thunders of the mimic battle died away, than the cannon began again, and this time in earnest. Gen. Hooker had sent over two divisions of cavalry, supported by two “picked brigades” of infantry, with artillery, to discover the meaning of all this noise. Stuart met them with his cavalry on Fleetwood Hill, near Brandy Station, and throughout all a June day wrestled with them in obstinate fight. At sunset they were repulsed and driven beyond the river again, but one thing had been accomplished: Lee's bayonets had been seen in the Culpeper woods, and thus

the presence of a portion of his infantry there was known. This, and the fact that A. P. Hill was still on the heights of Fredericksburg, summed up the knowledge of Gen. Hooker in reference to the movements of his antagonist.

Hill's presence there at Fredericksburg was tempting. Why not cross the Rappahannock, cut him to pieces before Lee could succor him, and advance on Richmond? Hooker suggested that plan, but President Lincoln demurred. His views were expressed in that rough and homely style, which, wanting in the dignity which Washington had set the example of to all in his "great office," was not deficient in a rude pith, and good sense:

"In case you find Lee coming to the north of the Rappahannock," wrote Lincoln to Hooker, "I would by no means cross to the south of it. I would not take any risk of being entangled upon the river, *like an ox jumped half over a fence, and liable to be torn by dogs, front and rear, without a fair chance to gore one way or kick the other.*"

Five days afterwards, the President wrote once more:

"I think Lee's army, and not Richmond, is your true objective point. If he comes towards the Upper Potomac, fight him when opportunity offers. If he stays where he is (in Culpeper), *fret him, and fret him.*"

President Lincoln and his Lieutenant were thus speculating and consulting on the probable intentions of their antagonist, when startling intelligence reached them from the Shenandoah Valley. Lee had executed a movement as successful as it was hazardous. With one

corps of his army, under Hill, at Fredericksburg, and another under Longstreet, on the banks of the Rapidan, he had pushed forward the third, under Ewell, by way of Chester's Gap, into the Shenandoah Valley — thus making of his army, directly in face of the enemy, a skirmish line, stretching over about one hundred miles. Then the object of this movement soon appeared. Ewell's infantry wound through the mountain gorge, crossed the Shenandoah at Front Royal, and pushing rapidly forward, attacked Milroy at Winchester, driving him thence with a loss of four thousand prisoners, twenty-nine pieces of artillery, and a great mass of military stores. Gen. Milroy had cruelly tyrannized over the unhappy people, ruling the whole country with a rod of iron, and in one day swift retribution had come upon him. Driven from his "Star Fort" at the point of the bayonet; hurried on his way with shot and shell; cut off and overwhelmed by a force sent to his rear, he had scarcely the time to escape in person, with a handful of men, across the Potomac.

"In my opinion," wrote Hooker, on the 25th of June, "Milroy's men will fight better *under a soldier*."

That was his epitaph!

Having thus brushed away this hornet's nest, Ewell pushed for Maryland, and this was the intelligence which came to strike at the same moment President Lincoln at Washington, and Gen. Hooker on the Rappahannock. It drew forth one of Lincoln's most characteristic dispatches — a curious document, full of good judgment, mingled with a sort of grotesque humor:

"If the head of Lee's army is at Martinsburg," wrote



Lincoln, "and the tail of it on the Plank Road between Fredericksburg and Chancellorville, *the animal must be very slim somewhere — could you not break him?*"

"A. LINCOLN."

There was little of the verbiage of "official dignity" there, and no "distinguished considerations;" but there was good sense. George Washington and John Adams — different personages from Lincoln — would never have used those words, but the suggestion was none the less valuable. Gen. Hooker ought to have struck at that long, slim line, stretched out over one or two hundred miles. Instead of doing so, he fell back to protect Washington.

The great game of chess was now in full progress. Lee's strategy had met with admirable success. Hooker was afraid to move upon Richmond: afraid to attack his opponent's flank; he was falling back to guard his own territory and capital. Thus Lee advanced without hindrance to the accomplishment of his designs; the three corps of his army moved on steadily, guided by the master mind.

Ewell had pushed into the valley, and Longstreet marched up to guard his rear. Ewell advanced toward the Potomac, and Longstreet followed. Then into the gap behind Longstreet, thus moving on, came up Hill from Fredericksburg. Thus corps by corps, the Confederate arms streamed northward, ready to concentrate and give battle at any moment, if Hooker had the boldness to attack.

The perplexity of that personage seems to have been extreme. He was ignorant of Lee's designs. Did the

Confederate commander intend to advance into Pennsylvania, or was this great movement designed to tempt his adversary to attack on the Rappahannock, when Lee would sweep down on his right and rear, interposing between him and Washington? The latter was probable, and Gen. Hooker fell back to Manassas. But then his perplexities increased. Did Lee intend a real invasion, or was he only waiting for Hooker to cross the Potomac, to pass the Blue Ridge, and advance upon Washington?

Gen. Hooker was in a maze, as were his most experienced advisers.

"Try and hunt up somebody from Pennsylvania," wrote his Chief of Staff, Gen. Butterfield, as late as June 17th, "who knows something, and has a cool enough head to judge what is the actual state of affairs there with regard to the enemy. My impression is that Lee's movement on the Upper Potomac is *a cover for a cavalry raid on the south side of the river*. . . . We cannot go boggling round until we know what we are going after."

To terminate if possible this paralysis of doubt, Gen. Hooker sent out a powerful force of cavalry and infantry from Aldie toward the Blue Ridge, drove Stuart before him, in spite of obstinate resistance, and at Ashby's Gap Longstreet's forces, which had advanced along the eastern slope of the Ridge, were suddenly unmasked. Through Chester's Gap, in his rear, Hill had rapidly passed into the valley. Thus all that was discovered amounted to this alone—that Lee's whole army was in the valley. What was his design?

All at once came a wild cry of terror, borne on the

wind from Pennsylvania. Southern troopers were swarming in the country around Chambersburg; the inhabitants were flying with their horses and cattle to the mountains; the whole State was in a blaze of excitement and apprehension. Then came worse news still. This was no mere "cavalry raid." Ewell's infantry had followed the cavalry; Longstreet and Hill were crossing the Potomac at Williamsport, and Shepherdstown in his rear. Lee's whole army was advancing rapidly into the Cumberland Valley.

General Hooker was thus certain of his adversary's plans. He was no longer apprehensive of an attack upon Washington from the Virginia side of the Potomac, and hastened to cross that river near Leesburg, to follow Lee. This crossing was effected on the 26th of June; his force was rapidly concentrated in the vicinity of Frederick City, when, on the very next day, the army was startled by the announcement that Gen. Hooker had been relieved from command.

Such was the fact. Gen. Hooker's head had fallen at Frederick City, as Gen. McClellan's had at Warrenton—in the midst of a great movement. The opponent of both, also, was the General-in-Chief, Halleck. But there was this difference: McClellan was surprised, nay, astounded, and bitterly resented the unexpected blow struck at him. Hooker accepted his fate serenely—for he had applied to be relieved.\* The cause of all was Harper's Ferry, where ten thousand troops still remained, and were of no earthly use. Gen. Hooker wished to utilize them, but the General-

\* Cond. of War, I., 293.

in-Chief would not permit it. Every human being has his hobby — Gen. Halleck's was Harper's Ferry. When Gen. Hooker stumbled against it, Gen. Halleck was inexorable. Thereupon, Gen. Hooker requested to be relieved — and was relieved.

The command thus falling from Hooker's hands, was assumed by General Meade, a soldier and a gentleman.

Meade did not order a single trumpet to be blown when he took command; did not promise in any general order to annihilate his opponent as soon as he could come up with him; did not criticise the movements of his predecessor, or vaunt his own prowess. He knew of what stuff his great adversary, Lee, was made, and the metal of the army which followed him. A mortal combat was before him, of which the issue was far from certain, and with becoming gravity and dignity, Gen. Meade assumed the great responsibility thrust upon him, not sought by him.

There are men whom you are compelled to respect as your enemies, as you would admire them were they your friends. Meade belonged to that class.

Hooker disappeared — Meade succeeded him — the Army of the Potomac did not exhibit by a single tremor even the consciousness that another hand grasped the helm. It moved on from Frederick City northward to offer battle to Lee.

Let us return to that officer now, and look at the invasion from a Confederate point of view. In the last days of June, Ewell had passed through Chambersburg, occupied Carlisle, and penetrated to within sight of Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania. Lee

had followed as far as Chambersburg, with the two corps of Hill and Longstreet.

For the first time soldiers of the Confederate States army were encamped on the soil of Pennsylvania. What was their deportment there? What was the result for the inhabitants? -

Plunder, cruelty, and outrage? Why not? Had not Gen. Pope made a desert of Culpeper, destroying without remorse every species of private property, seizing furniture and clothing, the bread and meat of women and children, burning the very houses over their heads, the ruins of which may still be seen? Had not Milroy made a hell of the country around Winchester? Had not subordinate officers—Stahl and Steinwehr and others—oppressed the unfortunate people beyond all power of words? Had not the war, long before, become a war upon women and children, and gray-beards—upon their property, their liberty, and their lives? If Lee retaliated, would history blame him very severely? *Would* he not retaliate, now that he was in the enemy's territory, making them realize the horrors which the Federal troops had inflicted upon Virginia?

If any one thought that of Lee, he was speedily undeceived. Here is what he said to his army at Chambersburg, in the heart of Pennsylvania, June 27, 1863:

“The Commanding General considers that no greater disgrace could befall the army, and through it our whole people, than the perpetration of the barbarous outrages on the innocent and the defenceless, and the wanton destruction of private property, that

have marked the course of the enemy in our own country. *It must be remembered that we make war only upon armed men.* The Commanding General, therefore, earnestly exhorts the troops to abstain, with most scrupulous care, from unnecessary or wanton injury to private property, and he enjoins upon all officers *to arrest and bring to summary punishment all who shall in any way offend against the orders on this subject.*"

Such was Lee's order — and it was obeyed. Here is the declaration of a Pennsylvanian, upon whose property a portion of the army had encamped:

"I must say they acted like gentlemen, and, their cause aside, I would rather have forty thousand rebels quartered on my premises than one thousand Union troops."\*

And one of the Richmond journals, bitterly criticising Lee's clemency, made the sneering statements that he flamed out at the robbing even of the cherry-trees, and if he saw the top rail thrown from a fence as he was passing, would dismount and replace it with his own hands!

Such was the contrast between the Federal and Confederate invasions. Why is the parallel drawn? Does any one care? No — the world is deaf to all that story, to-day. The South has committed the greatest of crimes — she has failed, and has no advocate. The truth is eternal — is mighty — and some day will prevail. The mills of the gods grind slowly — behind the blackest cloud is the sunshine; to-morrow, or the

\* *Cor. N. Y. Com. Advertiser*, July 7, 1863.

next year, or the next generation, that sun of truth will show itself, and everything will appear in its real colors.

Then the world will know what it is to act as a Christian gentleman, whatever wrongs have fired the blood — will see the grand proportions of the Virginian, Lee, and estimate him truly.

An outline has been presented of the movements of the two armies from the Rappahannock, northward.

We are now at the 1st of July, and on the threshold of the battle of Gettysburg.

To that “strategic point” — a sort of wheel-hub, from which radiate, like spokes, roads running in every direction — the two armies advanced, as though dragged by the hand of destiny. It was the inexorable law of war, however, not fate, which forced the adversaries to converge upon that point. Lee was looking forward to Harrisburg — Meade back to Pipe Creek, toward Washington. But Gettysburg said, “Come!”

Lee had been at Chambersburg with the main body of his army, under Longstreet and Hill. Ewell had meanwhile been sent on with his corps toward the Susquehannah. He had steadily advanced, occupied Carlisle, come in sight of Harrisburg, was about to attack, when a summons came from Lee to rejoin the main army at Gettysburg.

In fact the rapid advance of Gen. Meade made this movement indispensable. Lee’s communications with Virginia were menaced; it was necessary to guard them, and, recognizing this necessity, the Confederate commander turned to the right at Chambersburg,

crossed the South Mountain, and, on the morning of the first of July, was advancing to give battle to his adversary. In expectation of this encounter, Ewell had been recalled. Gen. Meade also saw the shadow of the great event approaching, and hurried forward. The heads of the two columns came together, and the "first day's fight at Gettysburg" followed.

From the moment when the blue and gray soldiers caught sight of each other, the thunder began to roar. Buford's cavalry, pushing out west of Gettysburg about a mile, on this morning, suddenly struck up against the advance brigades of A. P. Hill. Then followed a result which invariably characterizes encounters between infantry and cavalry. Gen. Buford fought hard, but his horsemen recoiled before the bayonets of Hill, and he was being driven back when General Reynolds hastened forward with his infantry.

Line of battle was then formed by the opposing commanders upon ridges, facing each other, west of Gettysburg, and the battle began in earnest.

Lee and Meade, in the rear, were startled by that sound, for neither expected or desired a battle to be fought there. Each appreciating the courage and resources of his adversary, felt that the result of the coming conflict largely depended upon manœuvring and position; to be thus plunged unawares into the struggle, suited neither.

But the dice-box had been rattled in the hand of fate, and the die was cast. The war-dogs had begun to growl, and they could not be dragged back.

Thus did it happen that the collision of the advance guards of the two armies brought on what became



nearly a decisive engagement. It might have been virtually made so by the Confederates, if that night they had seized upon Cemetery Hill. Decisive of all, perhaps — of much, certainly.

Before noon Lee and Meade had sent forward, division by division, powerful reinforcements to the columns engaged. Thus the "affair of advance guards" had become a wrestle of two armies. It was a lovely country and a lovely day, which looked on that hurly-burly of fierce passions. The fields were green with grass, or golden with the ripe grain, over which a gentle breeze passed. The landscape was broken by woods; in the west rose blue mountains; the sun was shining brilliantly through showery clouds; in the east the heavens were spanned by a magnificent rainbow.

Such was the scene of Arcadian beauty — golden fields, lit by the sunshine, with the symbol of peace bending over all — in which the mighty adversaries had now grappled. Only, other features of the landscape at that moment jarred upon the tranquil loveliness of the spot. The flame and smoke of burning farm-houses, fired by shell, rose threateningly, and swept across the fields; the hills rebellowed with the long roar of the artillery and the crash of musketry as the opponents closed in.

Warring passions have come to make an inferno of this paradise. By that rainbow ladder, the Angel of Peace, you would say, has ascended to heaven, hiding with her long, white wings, the pitying eyes which feared to look upon the terrible spectacle.

The opposing lines are drawn up on the two ridges,

facing each other, a mile west of Gettysburg, with Willoughby Run, a small stream, between them. Hill, driving Buford, takes the initiative, and throws his right across the stream. It is speedily assailed, and, attacking with the greatest gallantry, the Federal forces which have hurried forward, envelop and capture Gen. Archer, with several hundred men, and soon afterwards two regiments of Mississippians meet with the same fate. Surrounded in a ravine, they are seized, and triumphantly borne off, with their battle-flags. Thus, for the moment, fortune seems to smile upon the blue, and frown upon the gray.

But a great misfortune to the Federal side has come to balance this success. They have lost their brave Gen. Reynolds, corps commander. Hurrying forward to meet Hill, he has fallen, struck in the neck by a bullet, and is borne to the rear, already dying.

But Federal reinforcements continue to push forward to the scene of action. The men advance gaily, exclaiming, "We have come to stay!" It is one of their own officers, Gen. Doubleday, who is going before the Committee on the War to utter coolly the terrible witticism:

"And a very large portion of them never left that ground!"\*

Hill's advance force, thus hard pushed, holds its ground with the old gallantry, shown in so many battles, but the pressure on it is heavy. Moving more to the left, Hill concentrates, and offers a determined front, when all at once a welcome sight greets his eyes.

\* *Cond. of War*, I., p. 307.

It is a long line of bayonets, emerging from the northern woods, and the glimmer of gray uniforms.

This force is Ewell's. He has hurried forward from the banks of the Susquehannah at the summons of Lee; pushed straight for Gettysburg, and here he is, coming into line on Hill's left flank, opposite the Federal right. He seizes upon Oak Hill, a commanding eminence then, forms Rodes' division, all that has yet arrived, for battle, and the thunder of the guns upon his left tells Hill that the engagement is about to take a new phase.

The enemy, too, see that. They hurry forward a fresh corps, and place it on the right of their former line, and thus envelop Gettysburg on the west and north, both. Their line is a crescent, with its left half opposite Hill, its right half opposite Rhodes. Then the thunders are redoubled.

The battle rages all along the shores of Willoughby Run, in the fields below Seminary Ridge—the lines bending to and fro, the hills bellowing. From the roofs and steeples of Gettysburg affrighted burghers look on stupefied. By the roads in rear, long strings of panting Dutchmen are seen wending their way hurriedly to the rear;—"Stalwart, able-bodied wretches, in men's garments," a Northern correspondent of the *New York Commercial Advertiser*\* calls them—the

\* The same correspondent writes in a manner far from complimentary to the Gettysburghers: "There are," he says, "some of the most intensely mean persons in this neighborhood that the world produces. On Thursday, a bill of seventeen hundred dollars was presented to Gen. Howard for damage to the cemetery during the night. One man presented Gen. Howard a bill for thirty-seven and a half cents for four bricks knocked off the chimney of his house

Arcady of the day before has become a scene of conflict bitter beyond expression.

The Federal lines are stretched thus over the great fields west and north of the town, and seem about to drive the Confederate forces in their front, when a second reinforcement appears coming from the north. It is Early, commanding Ewell's second division, and Early takes his position upon Rodes' left. Thus the Confederate line has swept round in a semicircle, adapting itself to the enemy's—Early on its left, Rodes in the centre, Hill's troops upon the right.

But between the right and left wings of the Federal army is a gap. Ewell sees it, and gets ready. At three o'clock the great blow is delivered.

Rodes, holding Oak Hill, opposite the Federal centre, hammers at it with his guns; then suddenly he rushes forward, and breaks the Federal lines asunder, as an iron wedge splits a tree-trunk. His attack sweeps away the right of one corps and the left of another; the Federal army is pierced, and Early and Gordon, advancing at the same time against their right wing, the whole line is thrown into confusion, doubled up, and driven back, wildly flying, into Gettysburg, through which the disordered regiments stream rapidly, on their way to Cemetery Hill. The day is lost.

*by our artillery.* Our wearied, and, in many instances, wounded soldiers found pumps locked so that they could not get water. A hungry officer asked a woman for something to eat, and she first inquired how much he would pay. Another asked for a drink of milk, and the female wished to know if he had any change. These persons were not poor, but among the most substantial citizens of the town and vicinity." — *Cor. N. Y. Com. Advertiser*, July 7, 1863.

The Federal forces are in full retreat, leaving guns, flags, and five thousand prisoners in the hands of the Confederates. Gen. Hancock, sent by Meade, gallops up only to find that the day is decided—the advance corps of the Army of the Potomac overwhelmed; worse than all, that Cemetery Hill, that frowning rampart, the key-position of the whole, is only held by a single brigade, supported by the cavalry of Buford.

Has the reader of this page ever visited Gettysburg? If so, he will comprehend the terrible significance of this fact. Holding that powerful position, made, one would say, for artillery—with his right and left resting firmly on the rugged slopes of Culp's and Round-Top Hills—Gen. Meade could bid defiance to his adversary, and drive back any force which came against him. Losing possession of that range—forced back from it by the columns of Lee—that was to ruin Gen. Meade; for Lee once occupying Cemetery Hill, there was nothing left for the Federal commander but retreat.

On the evening of the 1st of July, 1863, the fate of the Confederacy was decided, it would seem, by the failure of the Confederates to advance and seize the great fortress thus within their very grasp. Who was to blame? History must answer the question. What is certain is, that the hill was not occupied. It was held by one brigade, some cavalry, and the disordered remnants of the two defeated corps, only—and no attack was made.

The moment passed. Hancock strained every nerve. Meade hurried forward with his main body. The hills swarmed with troops. On the next morning, Gen. Lee

saw in front of him, on that impregnable fortress, the glittering bayonets and bristling cannon of nearly the whole Army of the Potomac.

Let us look now at the ground upon which the final struggle was about to take place.

Cemetery Ridge, a line of hills running northward toward the town of Gettysburg, bends eastward in the vicinity of the place, and terminates in the rude acclivity of Culp's Hill. There rested Meade's right.

At the southern end of the ridge rises Round-Top Hill, a rugged and almost perpendicular peak — wild, frowning, jagged, bristling with woods. Here rested Meade's left.

Along the crest of the range, between these two points, were drawn up his infantry and artillery, ready for battle.

Lee occupied a range nearly parallel with his opponent, but lower, and commanded by it — Seminary Ridge. His right, held by Longstreet, was opposite Round-Top — his left, commanded by Ewell, bent round, east of Gettysburg, conforming itself to the enemy's line, and faced Meade's right on Culp's Hill.

A. P. Hill held the centre.

Between the opposing ranges was a little valley traversed by a stream, and waving with golden wheat, over which ran shadows as the breeze touched it.

In the midst of this lovely land, smiling in the sunshine, was now about to take place one of the bloodiest combats of all history. On one side — the Army of the Potomac — was courage, discipline, complete equipment, excellent soldiership in men and officers, and the consciousness that they were fighting on their own

soil, pressed by the foot of the stranger. On the other — the Army of Northern Virginia — was a courage certainly as reckless, a *materiel* certainly as excellent; but in addition, a wild elevation and self-confidence, unparalleled since the days of Napoleon. Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville had made every private rate himself as worth three of the enemy; no heart in all that host doubted the result for an instant; an indescribable afflatus, like the breath of victory, buoyed up the army; they went to battle dancing and singing, as though excited by champagne.

“I never even imagined such courage,” said a Federal surgeon to Gen. Kemper; “your men seemed to be drunk with victory, as they charged!”

The two armies were nearly equal in numbers.

“Including all the arms of the service,” says General Meade, “my strength was a little under one hundred thousand men.”

Gen. Lee’s was sixty-seven thousand bayonets — about seventy thousand of all arms, in the absence of Stuart’s cavalry. So the morning report declared, on Gen. Longstreet’s authority.

“The Army of Northern Virginia,” said Longstreet, “was at this time in a condition to undertake anything.”

You were right, General! It was only the impossible that was beyond their strength.

Such were the relative numbers of the two great armies, drawn up and facing each other, on the Gettysburg Heights, July 2, 1863. Each commander was waiting for the other to attack, and wisely. To be assailed — that was to enjoy an enormous advantage.

To assail—that was to run a terrible hazard. The lines advancing over those waving wheat-fields were doomed to destruction from the fire on the neighboring heights. Which side would first try that bloody advance?

It speedily became obvious that Gen. Meade had no such intention. He was plainly going to await his adversary's attack. Would Lee make that attack, however?—would he not rather execute a great flank movement by the Emmetsburg Road? \* At four in the afternoon that question was answered.

All the forenoon, Gen. Lee had remained silent. Seated on the stump of a tree, near the centre of his line, he reconnoitered his great adversary—seeking, apparently, for some opening in his armor. There seemed absolutely none. Right and left, as far as the eye could reach, stretched the glittering blue lines, defended everywhere by cannon, and to charge those heights, thus crowned with bayonets and artillery, seemed a hopeless undertaking. An assault aiming to turn the Federal left, in front of Round-Top, seemed to promise good results, however, and this assault was determined on by Lee.

At four in the afternoon all is ready. The attacking column will be that of Longstreet, holding the right—Lee's "Old War Horse," who had breasted so many shocks of battle, and never failed him yet. You have only to look at the calm face, half enveloped in the full beard, to understand that this is an obstinate fighter. On that face is written the stubborn tenacity

\* Expected by Gen. Meade—see his testimony.



of the bull-dog, who, once closing his teeth in the body of an enemy, will permit himself to be hewn in pieces without relaxing his hold.

Longstreet opens, first a heavy fire of artillery. With that great hammer he strives to loosen the iron joints of the Federal coat of mail in his front. Gen. Sickles receives this fire; he has thrown his lines forward considerably in front of the rest, and it will be necessary for Longstreet to overpower and drive him back before scaling the heights of Round-Top.

The hammer continues to bang; Longstreet forms his column of assault, consisting of Hood and McLaws; at four in the evening he moves. Then the thunder of the cannon drops to silence, and the veterans of the First Corps are hurled against the blue lines in their front.

From this moment until night descends—and the eyes of the dying see the “moon rise o’er the battle-plain”—one continuous crash of musketry and thunder of artillery rolls through the valley, and leaps back from the hills, deafening all ears. McLaws, holding Longstreet’s left, and supported by Hill’s right division, attacks the Federal salient, pushes forward into a peach-orchard in his front, and here, hour after hour, the battle continues to roar. In spite of Federal reinforcements, constantly arriving, the Confederates, slowly but surely, push back the opposing lines. Brigade after brigade of the Northern troops is swept away; the Confederates continue to advance; the great carnival of death is in full blast, and it is the gray soldiers who ride upon the wave of battle, bear-

ing them ever nearer to the heights, which, once attained, will give them victory.

Meanwhile, the assault of Longstreet's right division has been splendid. It is led by Hood, the great Texan, unsurpassed for dash and courage by any soldier in the army. Hood never pauses in his charge, for he is a man "to count on." He pushes straight across the Federal flank, sweeping back from Peach Orchard toward Round-Top, and penetrates the space between their left and the peak. At one blow Hood seems to have decided the great struggle. His Texans are rushing up the slope. Once rooted on this rugged peak, they will have Gen. Meade's army in reverse. Their cannon will enfilade his lines; the Cemetery height will be untenable; the Federal army will be dislodged from its grand position, and be forced to retreat upon Washington, pursued by Lee.

All this Hood sees at a glance; his Texans rush upon the hill, without skirmishers, in solid mass, every man running and yelling. The rocky slope is reached; the Texans dash toward the summit without pause; when suddenly on the crest they are met, bayonet to bayonet; beyond are confused groups of shouting and struggling men, dragging up cannon.

A single officer has saved the Army of the Potomac. Gen. Warren, riding by, as Hood charges, has seen the imminent peril — has imperiously ordered the signal-officers, about to retreat from Round-Top, to continue waving their flags — has seized a brigade, the first he can find — has rushed up the slope, directing cannon to be hauled up by the hands of the men; and when Hood's troops reach the crest, it is to find them-

selves met, breast to breast, by a brigade of infantry, who attack them, bayonet to bayonet, with clubbed muskets, with rocks, howling, yelling, dying, but dragging with them as they fall the foes with whom they have grappled.

In half an hour this bloody combat has ended. The head of Hood's column is hurled from the peak into the ravine — the enemy are massed upon the summit — over the dead bodies, thick strewn on the rocky crest, and the wounded, weltering in blood, rolls the hoarse and menacing thunder of the artillery, dragged thither at last, and now firing upon the gray soldiers beneath.

It was Vincent's brigade which did this work. The names of his men should be preserved. They saved the day at Gettysburg. Hear Gen. Meade:

“At the same time that they threw these immense masses against Gen. Sickles, a heavy column was thrown upon the Round-Top Mountain, which was the key point of my whole position. *If they had succeeded in occupying that, it would have prevented me from holding any of the ground which I subsequently held to the last.*”

That is to say, that the question whether Gen. Meade was to retreat or not, was decided in the thirty minutes' fight on the crest of Round-Top Hill.

Strange battle! The Federal forces driven on the first day's fight; but Cemetery Hill not occupied. Driven again in the second day's fight; but Round-Top Hill not secured. Fate seemed to fight against the South. There is one title for the battle of Gettysburg which should live in history — “The Great *Graze!*”

At nightfall Longstreet was retreating sullenly. He had fought with his well-known obstinacy; had clutched victory, it seemed, twice or thrice; but, promptly and rapidly reinforced at every point by brigades, divisions, corps, the Federal lines had stubbornly returned to the contest, worn out their opponents by sheer hard fighting: then they had advanced in turn, and forced the Confederates back beyond the peach orchard and wheat field. When night descended, the lines faced each other there — nothing had been gained. The moon rising slowly over the battlefield, looked down upon a thousand corpses — that was all.

Lee's first assault upon the enemy's position has thus failed; but he does not despair. He will try another. While Longstreet has attacked the enemy's left, Ewell has assailed their extreme right; has penetrated their line, occupied their breastworks, and at nightfall seems rooted firmly there; but at dawn he has been attacked in turn, driven from his position, and now, on this morning of the 3rd, is again in the plain, with all the labor to go over again.

General Lee, from his position on Seminary Ridge, at his centre, reconnoitres the Federal position through his field glass. There is no change in it, except that Gen. Meade has straightened his line, has his flanks thoroughly protected, and is not to be surprised on his right or his left.

One of two things must be done by Lee. He must retire, or attack the Federal centre. Which course will he pursue? He looks at his old army, cool, resolute, gay, believing in itself and in him. He resolves

to put all upon the die, and orders preparations to be made for a final assault.

We approach now one of those grand dramatic spectacles which stand out, bold, prominent, and bloody, on the great canvas of the world's wars. Gettysburg is to see a last charge—the glare is to deepen, the tragedy attain its utmost intensity in the rush of the Virginians upon Cemetery Hill.

For this hard work, Pickett's division of Virginia troops, which has just arrived, fresh from the rear, has been selected by Lee. He knows of what metal they are, and that he can depend upon them.

The great attack once determined upon, the arrangement of the troops is rapidly made. Pickett, with his Virginians, will make the assault, his flanks covered and supported by Wilcox and Pettigrew—Longstreet will guard their right against an attack from the force in front of him. If the Virginians burst through and seize the Cemetery heights, the whole centre of the army will rush into that gap; Meade's wings will be torn asunder; then his fate will be decided.

At one o'clock, Lee commences the execution of his plan. He has crowned Seminary Ridge, along the whole front of Longstreet and Hill, with artillery, and at one in the day, one hundred and forty-five pieces of cannon open their grim mouths, sending their hoarse roar across the valley. Eighty pieces reply to them, and for two hours these two hundred and twenty-five cannon tear the air with their harsh thunder, reverberating ominously in the gorges of the hills, and hurled back in crash after crash, from the rocky slopes of the two ridges. Searching for a word to describe this

artillery fire, that cool and unexcitable soldier, Gen. Hancock, could find nothing but "terrific."

"Their artillery fire," he says, "was most terrific. . . . It was the most terrific cannonade I ever witnessed, and the most prolonged. . . . It was a most terrific and appalling cannonade — one, possibly, hardly ever paralleled."

For nearly, or quite two hours, Lee continues this "terrific" fire. With this hammer of the Titans he aims to so batter the Federal centre, breaking down its strength, that when his sword's point is thrust forward, it will pierce every obstacle and drink blood. So the gigantic sledge hammers bang away without ceasing, until nearly three o'clock. Then the Federal fire slackens, appears to be silenced, and Lee in turn ceases his own. The moment has come.

The Virginians of Pickett form in double line, just in the edge of the wood on Seminary Ridge — then they are seen to move. They advance into the valley, supported by Pettigrew on the left, and Wilcox ready to follow on the right. So the division goes into that Valley of Death, advancing in face of the enemy's gun's at "common time," as the troops of Ney moved under the Russian artillery, on the banks of the Dnieper.

The two armies look on, holding their breath. It is a magnificent spectacle. Old soldiers, hardened in the fire of battle, flush, and lean forward with fiery eyes. Suddenly the Federal artillery opens all its thunders, and the ranks are swept from end to end by round shot, shell, and canister. Bloody gaps are seen, but the men close up; the line advances slowly, as before. The fire

redoubles ; all the demons of hell seem howling, roaring, yelling, screaming, gibbering in one great witch's sabbat. Through the attacking column tears a storm of iron, before which men fall in heaps, mangled, bleeding, their bodies torn to pieces, their dying hands clutching the grass. The survivors close up the ranks and go on steadily.

Virginia is not poor and bare, as some suppose her. She is rich beyond royal or imperial dreams—for she has that charge.

At three hundred yards from the slope, the real conflict bursts forth. There the thunder of the artillery is succeeded by the crash of musketry. From behind their stone breastwork the Federal infantry rise and pour a sudden and staggering fire into the assailants. Before that fire the troops of Pettigrew melt away. It sweeps them as dry leaves are swept by the wind. Where a moment before was a line of infantry, is now a mass of fugitives, flying wildly before the hurricane—the brave Pettigrew falling as he waves his sword and attempts to rally them.

The Virginians have lost the flower of their forces, but the survivors continue to advance. In face of the concentrated fire of the infantry forming the Federal centre, they ascend the slope, rush headlong at the breastworks ; storm them ; strike their bayonets into the flying Federals ; and a wild cheer rises, making the blood leap in the veins of a hundred thousand men.

They are torn to pieces, but they have carried the works. Alas ! it is only the first line. Beyond, other earthworks frown ; in their faces are thrust the muzzles

of muskets which spout flame — the new line, too, must be carried, and they dash at it.

Then is seen a spectacle which will long be remembered — Pickett's little remnant charging the whole Federal army. They charge, and are nearly annihilated. Every step death meets them. Then the enemy close in on the flanks of the little band — no supporters are near — they fight bayonet to bayonet, and die.

When the torn and bleeding remnant fall back from the fatal hill, pursued by yells, shouts, musket balls, cannon shot, they present a spectacle which would be piteous if it were not sublime. Of the three brigades, a few scattered battalions only return. Where are the commanders? The brave Garnett killed; the gallant Armistead mortally wounded as he leaped his horse over the breastworks; the fiery Kemper lying maimed for life, under the canister whirling over him. Fourteen field officers out of fifteen are stretched dead and dying on the field. Of the men, three-fourths are dead or prisoners.

The battle of Gettysburg is decided.

All the following day, Gen. Lee remained in position, awaiting an assault.

"I should have liked nothing better than to have been attacked," said Longstreet.

"My opinion is now," said Gen. Meade, "that Gen. Lee evacuated that position *not from the fear that he would be dislodged from it by any active operations on my part*, but that he was fearful that a force would be sent to Harper's Ferry to cut off his communications.

. . . . That was what caused him to retire."



When asked the question, "Did you discover, after the battle of Gettysburg, any symptoms of demoralization in Lee's army?" Gen. Meade replied, "No, sir. I saw nothing of that kind." \*

There was none; and Gen. Meade knew it. His great adversary was at bay, and care was taken not to press him too closely as he retired. On the 14th, Lee had recrossed the Potomac into Virginia, and the campaign was ended.

Gettysburg was the Waterloo—Cemetery Hill the Mont St. Jean—of the war.

The Virginians who charged there had the right to say,—

"The Old Guard dies—it does not surrender!"

Not without good reason is the anniversary of this great battle celebrated at the North with addresses and rejoicings—with crowds, and music, and congratulations. The American Waterloo is worth making that noise over; and the monument proposed there, is a natural conception.

What will that monument be? A lion, as at Waterloo?

Take care, Messieurs! The world will say it is Lee!

\* Meade, Cond. of War, I., 337.

## IX.

### THE WILDERNESS — MAY, 1864.

FROM 1861 to 1864, the war was war. Thenceforth it was slaughter.

The Federal Captains, McDowell, McClellan, Pope, Burnside, Hooker and Meade had fought pitched battles—sword's point against sword's point. Gen. Grant was now going to bind his left arm to his adversary's and stab with the bowie-knife until one or the other was dead.

His theory of war had in it a grand simplicity. Lee could only be crushed by hard blows. To attain that end he had only to "hammer continuously." When Gen. Meade spoke of manœuvring for position, Gen. Grant replied:

"Oh! I never manœuvre!"

There was the whole coming campaign in a nutshell.

The Army of Northern Virginia was, thus, in Gen. Grant's estimation, a body of men whom he could not intimidate—Gen. Lee a commander whom he could not out-general. Well, he would shatter that army by simple brute force—by the sheer weight of his gigantic sledge-hammer, "hammering continuously." He

would overcome Lee, not by "manœuvring," but by simple, plain, hard fighting.

In the first week of May, 1864, the Titan, with his hammer, crossed the Rapidan at the fords in Spottsylvania, and began to batter at his great opponent.

It remained to be seen which would first be shattered—the sledge-hammer or the anvil. That was of tempered steel, and would endure much. Would it endure this?

Such was the problem, which, from the 5th of May, 1864, to the 9th of April, 1865, the world had presented for its solution. As the days wore on, the radical change in the whole theory of the war became more and more apparent. There were to be no more battles of Manassas, Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg—combats wherein one side or the other had the advantage, and the struggle ended for the time. One great wrestle was no longer to sum up a campaign, and give the soldiers rest until the next. Gen. Grant had adopted a new plan—to hammer and hammer—to "fight it out on this line if it took all the summer"—to grapple and drag his great adversary, and hurl him into the "last ditch," or be hurled into it himself.

When war is thus conducted, it has, as we have said, a grand simplicity. It is true, it is not instructive to the military student, but it possesses the interest attached to bloody fighting. You can't help being vividly impressed by the spectacle of two bull-dogs clinging to each other with teeth and nails—two game cocks cutting each other's eyes out with their gaffs—a hundred thousand men, who, breast to breast, tear

each other to pieces. That terrible and ghastly campaign, dragging its bloody steps from the Wilderness to Appomattox, may not have been war exactly, as the world understands war, but it had a frightful attraction in it—its glare was baleful, but brilliant.

And Gen. Grant was not wrong. It is the fashion to deny him military genius. He had, at least, a just conception of the work before him. The rapier had been tried for three long years, and Lee, that great swordsman, had parried every lunge. What was his Federal adversary of the huge bulk and muscle to do now, in these last days? One course alone was left him—to take the sledge-hammer in both hands, and, leaving tricks of fence aside, advance straightforward, and smash the rapier in pieces, blow by blow, shattering the arm that wielded it, to the shoulder blade.

The Army of Northern Virginia could not be out-generated and out-fought; Grant determined that it should be worn out and destroyed, man by man. He could not at one great blow stab it to death; he resolved to drain its heart's blood, drop by drop. All his predecessors had failed. On the 9th of April, 1865, he had succeeded;—and was it not that good soldier, Albert Sydney Johnston, who said, "Success is the test of merit?"

Let us now follow Gen. Grant. At every step which he took, a roar shook the ground.

In tracing the battles which sprung up wherever his heel was placed, we shall have few manœuvres to describe. This or that brigade or division rarely accomplished this or that heroic feat. Brigades, divisions, even corps, are lost in the smoke. Through the lurid

cloud you saw only huge masses hurled against each other — a storm thundered — when night came, five or ten thousand men were dead, that was all.

The question was not whether this or that brigade had fought well. What is the result? was asked. Men had ceased to be human beings; they were units; the representatives of force, merely. For your death to be spoken of you must be at least the commander of a corps.

Half a mile gained, and a portion of the breastworks carried — ten thousand “casualties.” There was the whole.

But, in these observations upon Gen. Grant’s war-theory, as applied to Lee, we have somewhat anticipated the order of things. That programme was thrust on him. His plan, he says in his report, was “to hammer continuously against the armed force of the enemy and his resources, until, by mere attrition, if by nothing else, there should be nothing left of him, but an *equal submission* with the loyal section of our common country to the Constitution and laws.” (“An equal submission.” Ah! General, that phrase seems a mockery to-day — October, 1867 — does it not?) But that was after his first encounters with Lee. It was then that the “attrition” programme was found necessary. When Gen. Grant advanced to the Wilderness, his object was undoubtedly, and properly, to make as much of the road to Hanover Junction and Richmond as he possibly could, without a fight. This is scarcely to be questioned; at least, it was the belief of the highest officers of the Confederate army, and the attacks which he delivered in the jungle did not prove

the contrary. As the reader will soon see, Gen. Grant thought the force there was only Lee's rear guard as he retreated.

Before following the movements of the combatants, let us look for a moment at their relative numbers. Therein is the true glory of the South—a heritage of honour, of which nothing can deprive her.

Grant's "available force present for duty, May 1, 1864," was, by the official statement of the Federal War Secretary, one hundred and forty-one thousand one hundred and sixty-six men. Throughout the month of May reinforcements, "to repair the losses of the Army of the Potomac," constantly arrived, making the number of his troops operating "on this line" nearly, or quite, two hundred thousand men.

Lee had "present for duty" at the same time, as the rolls of his army will show, fifty-two thousand six hundred and twenty-six.\* Pickett and Breckenridge brought him afterwards ten thousand men at most. With about sixty-two thousand troops of all arms, Lee fought from the Rapidan to Petersburg, repulsing the assaults of nearly, or quite, two hundred thousand.

What was the explanation of Lee's paucity of

\* Col. Walter H. Taylor, A. A. G. of the army, puts the *effective* at somewhat less, viz. :

|                            |        |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Ewell.....                 | 13,000 |
| Hill.....                  | 17,000 |
| Longstreet.....            | 10,000 |
| <hr/>                      |        |
| Infantry.....              | 40,000 |
| Cavalry and artillery..... | 10,000 |
| <hr/>                      |        |

Total of all arms.....50,000

—MS. of Col. Taylor.

troops? Why did that army, which had numbered sixty-seven thousand bayonets at Gettysburg, now number only about forty thousand? To answer these questions a volume would be necessary — wounds closing now would bleed afresh. Let it pass. The fact alone need be stated — that the force defending Virginia was reduced to that. But they were the “Old Guard” of the army — men who had made up their minds to fight to the end — whose courage and constancy, not hunger, hardships, nakedness, wounds nor death could affect — who had resolved to live or die with Lee.

And they adhered to that resolve with unshaken constancy, to the end. They fought over every step of ground from the Rapidan to Appomattox with a nerve and dash so stubborn that their very enemies wondered; and when, cut down to less than eight thousand bayonets, they were driven to surrender, there were tears on the gaunt faces, black with powder, which had never been thus melted before.

Ten words from Lee had brought those tears. The roar of Grant’s cannon had only made them laugh and cheer.

Let us follow now the Federal Thor as he advanced to the arduous work before him.

On the morning of May 5th, Gen. Grant was across Rapidan with one hundred thousand men — the rest were hastening up.

When his adversary began thus his great advance, Lee had held the line of the Rapidan above as far as Liberty Mills. Hill was on his left, which was thrown

back toward Orange Court House — Ewell on his right — Longstreet was in reserve, near Gordonsville.

No sooner, however, had Grant begun to move than Lee broke up his camps, put his army in motion, and — evidently without any design of retreating upon Richmond — went down to the Wilderness to fight.

Some critics called Lee cautious; there was a terrible audacity in his caution. With his fifty thousand, he was going to attack Grant's one hundred and forty thousand — to order "Halt!" to that commander in full career.

On the morning of the 5th, he was in the Wilderness, had thrown down the gauntlet, and the great struggle began.

We have already described that singular and sombre country — a land of thicket, undergrowth, jungle, ooze, where men could not see each other twenty yards off, and assaults had to be made by the compass. The fights there were not as easy even as night attacks in open country, for at night you can travel by the stars. Death came unseen; regiments stumbled on each other, and sent swift destruction into each other's ranks, guided by the crackling of the bushes. It was not war — military manœuvring; science had as little to do with it as sight. Two wild animals were hunting each other. When they heard each other's steps, they sprung and grappled. The conqueror advanced, or went elsewhere. The dead was lost from all eyes in the shadowy depths.

This may seem a fancy sketch. It is the truth, and that truth is shown by the curious spectacle here presented of officers, advancing to the charge in that jun-



gle, *compass in hand*, attacking not by sight, but by the bearing of the needle.

In this mournful and desolate thicket did the great campaign of 1864 begin. Here in blind wrestle, as at midnight, did two hundred thousand men, in blue and gray, clutch each other—bloodiest and weirdest of encounters. War had had nothing like it. The genius of destruction, tired, apparently, of the old commonplace killing, had invented “The Unseen Death.”

Let us now follow the great drama, scene by scene, accompany its advance, step by step, to the fall of the curtain.

Lee marching down from Orange, found himself, on the morning of the 5th of May, in face of the enemy. He had only two of his corps with him—those of Hill and Ewell. Longstreet had not arrived from Gordonsville.

Ewell, on the left and in advance, occupied the Old Turnpike, across which, as his troops arrived, he formed line of battle. Hill came by the Plank Road, on the right of Ewell, and formed line there. These two great highways, running from the west toward Chancellorsville, struck straight into Grant's flank, as he marched by way of the Brock Road toward the South.

The Federal Generals had not believed that Lee would have the boldness to advance and attack. They were sure that he would fall back to the line of the Central Railroad to protect Richmond. When the gray-coats now appeared in their front, the force was supposed to be merely a decoy to detain the Federal

army while Lee pressed forward toward Hanover Junction.

Gen. Meade, at least, thought so. On this morning he was with Grant at Wilderness Tavern, and said :

“They have left a division to fool us here, while they concentrate and prepare a position toward the South Anna, and what I want is to prevent those fellows from getting back to Mine Run.”

Those fellows were Lee, Hill, and Ewell. They were not intent on getting back to Mine Run, or fooling anybody. On the contrary, they were bent on fighting — a fact which soon became apparent.

At noon, the combat — a species of “feeler” preceding the bloody battle of the next day — began.

The head of Ewell's column had just formed line of battle, across the Old Turnpike, when it was furiously assailed by Warren's corps of the Federal army. Then came the tug. Warren's assault was so rapid and determined that Ewell's front brigades were driven in on his main body. There the enemy found, however, the real wall. Ewell threw his remaining force into line of battle; advanced straight upon Warren; swept him back; seized two pieces of artillery, and about a thousand prisoners; and the whole Federal force was crushed back into the thickets of the Wilderness from which they had emerged.\*

Such was the result of the first assault — made, ap-

\* The Federal loss in this fight was three thousand men, but Ewell lost some of his best officers. Among these it may be permitted the present writer to mention his dear friend, Colonel William W. Randolph, one of the bravest gentlemen of Virginia. Peace to his ashes!

parently, upon the theory that the Confederate force was small, and could easily be destroyed. It was now found to be formidable, and to occupy both the Turnpike and Plank Road.

An attack followed upon the force holding the latter. The thunder on the left had scarcely died away when a heavy assault was made on A. P. Hill, extending across from Ewell's right. There an obstinate attempt was again made by Gen. Grant to break through and find out what was behind.

The attack was stubborn, the lines closing in, in a rough wrestle; but no headway was made, though Gen. Hancock put his best troops into the fight. "The assaults," says Gen. Lee, "were repeated and desperate, but every one was repulsed." When night fell, the attack had completely failed in driving Hill from his ground, and the Federal forces fell back to their original position in the thickets, along the Brock Road, from which they had advanced.

Thus ended the first round. Result—nothing. Gen. Grant had, however, discovered that nearly the whole Confederate army was in front of him, bent on a fight; that if he did not attack, they would; and he resolved to bring on the battle at once.

Lee had come to the same resolution. The affair seemed arranged in council of war between the two commanders. Grant ordered an attack at five in the morning—Lee ordered an attack at five in the morning. And at five, accordingly, on the morning of the 6th of May, the musketry began to rattle.

Then the opposing lines rushed together; the thick-

ets thundered with the long crash of small arms, for that was no place for artillery.

The battle of the Wilderness had begun in earnest.

It was a furious grapple all along the lines of the two armies, rather than a battle in the ordinary meaning of the term. There was no room for strategy—it was useless to manœuvre for position, when one spot of ground was as good as another. Gen. Grant, at least, seemed to have no plan beyond attacking his adversary in front, and breaking him to pieces.

It speedily became apparent, however, that Gen. Lee had a plan, and a thoroughly matured one. That plan was to envelope the left flank of the Federal army, as it stretched out along the Brock Road running southward—attain the rear of their left wing,—and drive back the whole army on the Rapidan.

At five, as we have said, the opponents closed in, fighting breast to breast almost, in the thicket. Each had thrown up slight temporary breastworks of saplings and dirt—beyond this they were unprotected. The question now was which would succeed in driving his adversary from these defences, almost within a few yards of each other, and from behind which crackled the musketry.

Never was sight more curious than that. On the low line of these works, dimly seen in the thicket, rested the muzzles, spouting flame; from the depths rose cheers; charges were made and repulsed, the lines scarcely seeing each other; men fell, and writhed, and died, unseen;—their bodies lost in the thicket, their death groans drowned in the steady, continuous, never-ceasing crash.

In front of Hill, holding the Confederate right, Grant had massed his crack troops, determined, apparently, to break through, or die trying.

The greatest merit of this officer was undoubtedly his skill in massing for assault; and Hill here felt his heavy hand. He was borne back by the simple weight of the mass thrown against him, and at seven o'clock had been driven more than a mile on the army trains, in front of which Stuart's cavalry made an obstinate stand. Grant was pressing on—Lee's whole right seemed carried away, his left, under Ewell, cut off from succor,—when at this moment Gen. Longstreet appeared upon the scene.

That officer had marched from Gordonsville, followed the Plank Road, pressed forward more rapidly at the sound of the firing, and now, as Hill fell back, fighting obstinately, aided by Stuart, Longstreet came to their assistance.

The Federal commander paused to reform his disordered line before striking a decisive blow. When, about nine o'clock, he advanced to deliver that blow, he struck up against Longstreet and recoiled.

Then Lee took the initiative. Grasping the fresh forces of Longstreet—ten thousand veteran troops, upon whom long experience told him he could rely—he hurled them against Hancock's corps in his front; swept away two divisions at the first blow; and advancing steadily, drove back the whole left wing of the Federal army in confusion, to the line of Brock Road.

For the moment, then, everything was carried away. No exertions of the Federal officers could rally the

men. The troops broke, and a great victory seemed about to crown the day.

Lee was pressing on; his hand reached out to clutch the Brock Road, and by that means turn the Federal left.

"I thought we had another Bull Run on you," said Longstreet to a Northern writer, long afterwards, "for I had made my dispositions to seize the Brock Road."

To understand the significance of that threat, look at the map. The Brock Road held by Lee, Grant was shut up in the Wilderness. There was no more chance for him than there had been for Hooker. He was flanked and huddled up in the thicket.

That moment was undoubtedly the turning point of the whole campaign. But this sombre Wilderness was hostile to the South. What shadowy Fate was it that ever tracked the Confederates there?—that struck down Jackson at the instant when he was about to extend his left at Chancellorsville, and cut off Hooker—that now struck down Longstreet when his right reached out to cut off Grant?

Longstreet had formed his column for the great assault; the blow was about to be delivered—when riding with his staff in front of his own lines, he was mistaken in the thicket for a Federal officer, and fired on, at twenty paces, by his own men, as Jackson had been.

That fatal fire arrested everything for the time. Longstreet was struck by a bullet in the throat, which, inflicting a dangerous wound there, buried itself in his right shoulder, which was paralyzed for many months afterwards. He was borne to the rear, along the ad-

vancing lines of his men, as Jackson had been — returned their enthusiastic salutes, and disappeared, pale and bleeding.

So fell Longstreet in his great moment, when he seemed to hold the victory in his clenched hand.

Before Gen. Lee could arrive, and take the place of his Lieutenant, the golden moment had passed. More than three hours had been lost. The Federal left, seeing its danger, had called for reinforcements; they had hurried to the threatened point; when Lee attacked in person, about four, P. M., Hancock's line was thoroughly reformed, strengthened, and impregnable.

It was no longer an enemy fleeing in confusion, but a massive order of battle behind works which must be carried by assault.

Above all, was the Brock Road looked to. That vital point was now guarded by a force which made the hopes of carrying the position desperate.

Lee, nevertheless, attacked, and then came the veritable struggle, to which all that preceded had been but the preface.

The spectacle was grand and terrible. The woods had been set on fire; flames crackled, dense clouds of smoke rose; from that witch's cauldron of fire and suffocating smoke rose cheers, groans, shouts, and the long crash of musketry, as the lines closed in. Where the wounded were struck down they fell; where the dying staggered, they breathed flame. It was a veritable hell "in little."

Lee led the Texans of Gregg in person, into this

pandemonium, and it was here that the troops, seeing the old cavalier exposing himself recklessly, shouted :

“ To the rear ! To the rear ! ”

That shout brought back the old days of Napoleon — the hour when he promised his men that if they fought as he wished, he would not lead them and expose himself.

It was long before that protest of “ Lee to the rear ! ” rising in a shout from the men, moved its object. At moments like that, Lee was no longer the Commander-in-Chief, but the *sabreur*.

The battle was now in full blast, and the Wilderness was swept by a hurricane. The two armies were grappling in the thicket ; and the combined forces of Hill and Longstreet drove everything in their front.

As the gray masses rushed through the blazing thicket, the blue lines gave way — the Confederates dashed headlong to the works — and, storming them at the point of the bayonet, planted their standards there, and uttered a wild cheer, which rose above the din and the flames.

The enemy's works were thus won, but they were worthless. What were they in that crazy country where there was no “ position,” and no “ advantage of ground ” — where you could not see ten yards in your front ? The enemy, nevertheless, made a vigorous effort to recover them, and the fighting continued until night, when it terminated, leaving the two armies still locked in that miserable thicket — neither driven.

On Lee's left, Ewell had had a hard tussle with Gen. Sedgwick ; and here it was that Gordon, that brave of braves, made an attack, which, if made in greater



force, would have probably done for the right of the Federal army what Longstreet endeavored to do against its left — that is, envelope and crush in its whole right wing.

It is useless to speak of Gordon to any old soldier of the army. They know that brave soldier — that man possessing the *élan* of Murat, with the coolness and acumen of the first army leaders of history. He urged in the morning a turning movement against the Federal right, and it was not made. In the evening it was seen to be the thought of a great soldier, and Gordon was ordered to make it, and did make it. He advanced upon Sedgwick, turned his flank, struck him with the bayonet, drove the Federal troops in disorder from their works, and was in the rear of Grant's army, ready to "turn and rend it," when he was ordered to return.

He had broken to pieces the Federal right; captured two of their Generals; the ground was strewn with muskets, knapsacks, and dead bodies — and on the next morning it was found that the enemy had abandoned the entire line of works on their right.

Such was Gordon's great blow. He did what he could with his force.

Thus the battle had ended on the left as on the right.

Neither side had gained anything.

But Gen. Grant had made up his mind to one thing — that he would get out of that wretched country as soon as he possibly could.

He had attacked his adversary with all the troops at his command, and instead of driving Lee, Lee had driven him. It was therefore necessary to advance

or retire — and Grant was not the man to retire then.

He put his army in motion ; hurried forward by the Brock road toward Spottsylvania ; pressed on as rapidly as Stuart's cavalry would permit, and reached Spottsylvania Court House, only to find Lee in his front there.

In the gloomy depths of the Wilderness thickets lay thousands of corpses in blue and gray — that was all.

The whippoorwill was crying from the tangled underwood.

The war-hounds had gone to tear each other elsewhere.

## X.

### BY THE LEFT FLANK — FROM THE “HORSE-SHOE” TO THE CRATER.

THROUGH the flame, the smoke, and the uproar of the Wilderness thicket, we have seen the two great antagonists, Lee and Grant, reeling to and fro in that fierce struggle of the 6th of May.

It was a veritable battle that was fought there — sudden, unexpected, desperate — and it was the last pitched battle of the war.

From that moment, all things changed. The revolution entered upon a new phase. Plainly, Grant could only wear his opponent out by a policy of “attrition,” and Lee accepted the challenge, and prepared for the ordeal.

To meet the blows of mace or battle-axe in the days of chivalry, men put on armor. To sustain the impact of Grant’s sledge-hammer, in May, 1864, Lee cased his lines in earthworks. The “attrition” of logs and dirt was better than the attrition of flesh, blood, and muscle. So after the 6th of May, Lee drew a line of bayonets across Grant’s path, and, in front of this steel hedge, threw up breastworks.

The result vindicated the good judgment of the first captain of modern times.

Between the Rapidan and the Appomattox, about two hundred thousand men threw themselves against about sixty thousand, behind these works, and failed utterly in breaking through.

What this obstinate hammering of the Federal Thor cost him, the official reports will show. The exhibit is frightful. The "pegging away" programme had resulted, on the 5th of June, that is to say, in one month after the crossing of the Rapidan, in a Federal loss of sixty thousand men — about the number of Lee's army.

To follow now in outline, but step by step, the great wave of invasion. Every day saw an engagement more or less bloody. Two or three times a month, however, the Federal commander rushed madly against his antagonist behind these fatal works — a tremendous conflict followed, — and the blood and death of these red days was frightful enough to distinguish them from the rest, projecting them, in bold relief, dark, terrible and tragic, from the rest of the great war canvas.

These fights were called the battles of the Horse-Shoe, of Cold Harbour, and the Crater. Therein horror culminated; blood did not flow, it gushed.

On the night of the 6th of May, in the Wilderness, Gen. Grant awoke to the consciousness that he could make no headway against Lee there; and, as we have seen, he moved rapidly by his left flank toward Spottsylvania Court House — that is to say, on the straight road to Richmond.

Lee had foreseen this movement, and had prepared for it. From the MS. statement of a confidential officer of his staff, we take the following lines:

“Gen. Lee here displayed that faculty he possessed of divining and anticipating his opponent’s intentions. It is believed by some that Gen. Lee first moved, or retreated, toward Spottsylvania Court House, and that Grant followed. Not so. After his successful attack on Grant, he, all at once, seemed to conceive the idea that his enemy was preparing to forsake his position, and move toward Hanover Junction, *via* the Court House; and, believing this, he at once detailed Anderson’s division, with orders to proceed rapidly toward the Court House. Gen. Grant *first* commenced the movement in that direction, and Gen. Lee moved to ‘check’ him.”

The writer of these lines attributes thus the movement of Lee to the intuition of genius. It was, however, the result of military calculation. Grant was defeated every where in the Wilderness; thus he was certain to advance or retire. He was not retiring; then he was advancing. The crack of cavalry carbines, on the morning of the 7th, from the direction of Todd’s tavern, showed the truth of this surmise. In fact, Grant’s entire force was moving; it hastened to Spottsylvania Court House as rapidly as Stuart’s cavalry would permit it; and when it reached that point, there again was the gray lion, Lee, in the path. Fitz Lee, with his horsemen, had stubbornly held their ground there — the gray infantry had now arrived.

Warren, hastening on to seize the key position, struck up against the head of Longstreet’s column on the 8th, attacked with vigor, was repulsed with loss, could, therefore, make no headway, and waited for the rest. On the morning of May 9th, the two armies found themselves in face of each other — the Federal forces formed along the north bank of the Po river, the Southern lines holding the south bank, and thus barring the way to Richmond.

Thus Lee — that stubborn obstacle — was still there — worse than all he was entrenched. From right to left extended, in front of Gen. Grant, a line of earth-works which he must turn, or charge.

He tried the latter first, on the famous “12th of May.”

On the 10th, he had already assaulted Laurel Hill, on the Confederate left, where there were no breast-works, and had recoiled from it with a loss of five or six thousand men. It was a hardy decision which the Federal commander now adopted — to storm Lee’s front.

The point selected for assault was the famous “Horse-Shoe” — of bloody memory to the Southerners.

Did the reader of these lines fight there — either clad in blue and attacking, or in gray, and receiving that attack? If so, no reference to the ground is necessary. But for other readers, a few words are indispensable.

However great Lee was as an engineer, and however careful in selecting his ground, and in forming his order of battle, that ground was often selected, that order of battle formed by his subordinates — nay, by the very rank and file.

A brigade marched, halted, found the enemy in front, and straightway the men began to throw up a dirt breastwork. This was done without orders, without spades — at hap-hazard, and with the bayonet. Thus it often happened that when Gen. Lee came to the front, he found his line of battle formed — sometimes according to rule, sometimes utterly opposed to all rules.

From this originated the Horse-Shoe. It was a sa-

lient projected from the main line — a species of triangle, nearly north of the Court House, — and presented a temptation to the enemy which no well-regulated military mind was capable of resisting. As soon as Gen. Grant saw it, he determined to attack it.

Now, why, it may be asked, if the position was so dangerous, did not Gen. Lee change his line, shortening and strengthening it? The reply is, that to retire a line of battle in face of the enemy is easier to speak of than to do. So the Horse-Shoe was left there.

On the morning of May 12th, Gen. Grant delivered his great blow at this weak point in his adversary's cuirass.

All night his forces were concentrating in front of it. His design was to make a wedge of his best-tempered troops, drive it into the Horse-Shoe, split that stubborn obstacle, his opponent's line, and then, throwing his whole army into the opening, separate Lee's wings, and destroy him.

The plan was excellent. Humanly speaking, with Lee's line once broken, his army was effectually disrupted. Grant saw victory hovering for him in the dim dawn of that May morning.

As the first beams of day began to struggle through the mist, the great war-engine began to move. The crack corps selected for the Federal wedge advanced without noise, came on the Confederate skirmishers some hundreds of yards in front, walked over them without firing a shot, for fear of giving the alarm, and then, as day began to dawn, the column of assault dashed with wild cheers up to the Horse-Shoe.

The result was terrible—the blow almost mortal.

The attack was wholly unexpected, and, as the artillery defending that portion of the line had been retired on the evening before, its warning voice, calling to arms, was not heard.

The Confederate infantry manning the works, woke from sleep to feel the bayonet thrust into their breasts. The Federal infantry mounted the works almost unopposed, swarmed in the trenches, fusilladed the half-awake Southerners, bayoneted some, stabbed, thrust, cut at others, drove the whole force from the Horse-Shoe, in spite of heroic resistance, and a rolling thunder of cheers rose from the woods, electric with victory.

We have said "in spite of heroic resistance," and the resistance of those half-awake, almost unarmed men, was heroic. It is nothing to trained soldiers to fight in open field, in broad day, with lines formed, artillery in position, the enemy there in front, man against man, bayonet against bayonet, with the banner floating in the sun, and the army leaders in front, directing all. Then, even the timid gather heart, and do their duty in action; shoulder to shoulder the men advance to the assault.

But to be surprised in the dark hour just preceding day—to be attacked in sleep—to be waked from a dream of home, and wife, and children, by a bayonet-thrust—to start up and utter a cry, with which blood mingles—to shout "to arms!" and then to fall back in a pool of gore—to see your enemy swarming everywhere, and shooting down all who resist—to hear diabolical cries, hoarse exclamations, curses, menaces, yells, and to feel that all is over before the fight has begun—



that is enough to try stout nerves, and test soldiership. The men who fight then are brave; heroic resistance to an attack like that shows race and blood. The resistance of the Southern infantry in the Horse-Shoe that morning was the resistance of true soldiers. Starting from slumber, their first thought was the musket, and the clutch on the weapon followed. Then commenced a fight in the trenches which had in it something diabolical and fearful. Men fell and died in the darkness; breasts were pierced by unseen bayonets; invisible clubbed muskets dealt blows in the dark; a wild and terrible wrestle, as of nightmares incarnate, took place in the trenches.

Quick reports, then the sudden crack of a fusillade, then the roar of a few cannon—that was all. The Federal troops dashed on the guns, and tore the lanyards from the hands of the cannoneers. Capt. William Page Carter bravely rushed to his single gun, with his own hands fired it until the enemy caught his arm, and made him prisoner; then, that last gun silenced, the drama ended.

The Horse-Shoe was taken, and two or three thousand men of Johnson's division, with eighteen pieces of artillery, just hurried forward, captured. Federal cheers vibrated in the morning air above the woods and orchards—the Confederates had ceased to fight—were dead, dying, or retreating.

Then came the moment when great generals crush their opponents. If the Northern army had poured into that fatal gap, and rushed straight upon Lee, it is not too much to say that he would have been driven from his position. But its movements were delayed.

Time passed. When Gen. Grant had made his preparations and advanced, he found his opponent in a new position — with a line straighter, shorter, stronger — and every gray soldier ready to receive the great assault.

It was made, and it raged from dawn to evening, but accomplished nothing. The Southern lines, fighting in the open field, did not budge an inch. When night descended, the great success of the Horse-Shoe had brought no result to the Federal commander, except the mere capture of some prisoners and artillery. Then with night came rest; new breastworks rose, crowned with artillery; the Confederates were laughing and saying, "Come on, we are ready!"

In front of this line Gen. Grant remained more than a week, moving to and fro, reconnoitering, demonstrating, feeling everywhere for an opening in his adversary's breastplate. There was none, and yet that opening was indispensable for successful assault. The hammer had been clanging for weeks now, and no joint was loosened. It was evident that the anvil would not break. Somewhere the sword's point must glide in, but that somewhere eluded the most vigilant search.

Demonstrations, movements, "manœuvring" — the much despised manœuvring — amounted to nothing. Grant's crescent-shaped line revolved around his opponent's right; but there, when it arrived, was the Lee-crescent awaiting it. Another revolution — there still was Lee.

Then, one morning, when the Confederate commander was about to extend his right still farther, to

meet a new movement of his adversary, a swift-riding courier brought him a dispatch, which he read with calm attention. Grant was moving his left flank toward Hanover Junction; he had given up all further attacks upon Lee in Spottsylvania. Grant hastened forward through the woods and fields; headed straight for Hanover Junction; arrived; threw a column over the North Anna — and saw Lee awaiting him.

He reached the river on the 23rd of May; on the 26th he had given up in despair the attempt to defeat Lee there. Some hard fighting is summed up and passed over in that brief statement. Were we to describe all the hard fighting of this bloody campaign, the present sketch would be swollen into a volume.

One feature of this occasion, however, is worthy of note — Lee's peculiar order of battle. Between the two commanders lay the river. Grant's object was to force its passage. To accomplish this, with the least possible loss, he threw a column over on Lee's left, and one on his right, thinking, doubtless, that this movement would induce his adversary to retire his line.

The line was not retired. Lee seemed determined here to act upon the maxim of Napoleon never to do what your enemy wishes you to do — if for no other reason, simply because he wishes you to do it. So, instead of retiring, Lee threw back his right and left wings, clinging with his centre to the river — his army taking thus the form of two sides of an equilateral triangle. One might have fancied a grim humour in this movement. It forced Gen. Grant to make two river crossings if he wished to reinforce either wing by moving troops from the other. The "situation" evi-

dently displeased the Federal commander. He recrossed his columns, and on the night of the 26th withdrew quietly, and with secrecy, toward the lower Pamunkey, intending to cross at Hanover town, and hurry forward upon Richmond.

On the 27th he was over at Hanover town; hastened on; reached the Tottapotamoi, a sluggish stream of the Hanover slashes, and there, on the southern bank of the water course, was Lee.

Then the thunder recommenced. The great hammering operation went on night and day—in infantry wrestled, cavalry clashed, artillery roared. The days were waked and put to sleep with thunder.

In Grant's path still lay the old lion, shaking from his mane every javelin launched against him, and watching his opportunity to spring, or ready to meet the spring of his huge adversary. It was at Cold Harbour, on the 3rd of June, that they clutched.

Reaching that point by his incessant flank movement, on the 1st of June, Gen. Grant, on the 3rd, made another assault like his attack on the Horse-Shoe.

This was the battle of Cold Harbour, Number Two.

Strange freak of chance,—the unskilled reader may exclaim,—which rolled the wave of battle to the New Kent fields a second time, pouring out more blood there, now, in June, 1864, than there was poured out in June, 1862. No—in war there is no chance; there is law. There is a goddess more powerful than the Greek Necessity, with her iron wedge—it is the Terrain. In all coming ages, as in June, 1862 and 1864, an enemy attempting to force the Chickahom-

iny and assail Richmond, must fight near Cold Harbour.

Grant was compelled to fight there, or to continue his Wandering-Jew march — and he fought.

As in Spottsylvania, he selected early dawn for his time of attack, and at dawn, on June 3, he assailed Lee's whole front — not manœuvring at all, but attacking as the bull attacks — head down, and determined to sweep away every obstacle, or crack the *os frontis*.

Thus, that fight was not a battle so much as a butchery. No other word so well describes it. The mad combat was over in thirty minutes, and it cost Gen. Grant thirteen thousand men. Lee's loss was about as many score.

How to describe such a conflict? There is nothing to describe. There was no brainwork of the commander about it; it was simply and purely a brute rush upon breastworks, and a carnival of death.

It may not be just to Gen. Grant to say that, with the information before him, he ought not to have made that attack, for all the authorities go to show that in the Federal army at that time, there was an almost universal conviction that the Army of Northern Virginia was nearly disorganized and thoroughly demoralized by the tremendous battles of the Wilderness and Spottsylvania. Grant, doubtless, believed that he had no other alternative than to force the Chickahominy; that a short, sharp, and decisive blow might be bloody, but would attain that object; that the attempt was thus worth making, in view of the mighty results attending success.

Let military critics decide the question. We narrate.

At half-past four in the morning, Grant made a resolute attack on Lee's entire front. The men moved forward bravely got nearly; up to the breastworks in many places; did all they could; but every where, in thirty minutes — that is, by five o'clock — were hurled back by the merciless Confederate fire — or they were dead and dying in front of the works.

Gen. Lee sent to A. P. Hill to ask the result of the attack on him. Hill took the officer with him, in front of his line of works, and showed him the Federal dead piled up and lying on each other.

“Tell Gen. Lee it is the same all along my front,” he said.

And it was the same, or nearly, along the front of the whole army.

The Federal troops had done all that men could do. The impossible was beyond their strength. They felt the hopeless character of the undertaking after that first charge, and doggedly refused to make another attempt. The order from Gen. Grant was transmitted to the corps commanders, thence to the commanders of divisions, thence to the brigadiers, thence to the colonels, thence to the captains, and the captains drew their swords, placed themselves in front of their men, and ordered, “Forward!”

No response came. The men did not move. The old soldiers of the Army of the Potomac knew what they could do, and what they could not do. They could not carry the Confederate works, and they did not intend to go and get killed in front of them. This

is the Federal account of what took place in that army on the morning of June 3, 1864.

About one o'clock in the day, a profound silence settled down upon the two armies. Not even a skirmisher's musket cracked. Gen. Grant had lost, as we have said, thirteen thousand men. His whole loss, from the Rapidan to this time, amounted to about sixty thousand. Lee's was about eighteen thousand. That was the result of attacking breastworks and of fighting behind them. Taking the casualties as a test, those breastworks had tripled Lee's strength.

The bloody work of June 3, settled the question whether Gen. Grant could force the Chickahominy. He found that movement beyond his strength, and, on the 12th, recommenced his left flank advance — this time across the Chickahominy, and across the James, on Petersburg. There he would commence the siege of Richmond.

From the first, that had been the true card to play. There were only two men who seemed to know it — Lee and McClellan.

Lee had said, as far back as 1861, that this was the weak side of Richmond, for an attack there threatened the Confederate communications with the South. And McClellan, after his defeat at Cold Harbour, had urged, as Gen. Halleck's letters show, the adoption of the very scheme which Gen. Grant now carried into effect.

What was declared absurd in 1862, was now, in 1864, seen to be dictated by the soundest military science. Defeated at Cold Harbour, Grant made for Petersburg, and nearly surprised and seized the town; but Lee ar-

rived, and a powerful line of works was drawn around the place. By the last of July, Gen. Grant had sat down before Petersburg, determined, apparently, on not only "fighting it out on this line, if it took all the summer," but many summers.

Honour to obstinate resolve, and the heart that does not despair! Grant had them.

We have placed at the head of this sketch the titles of the three great struggles, *par excellence*, which marked the immense campaign, extending from the crossing of the Rapidan, in May, 1864, to the capture of Petersburg, in April, 1865. In the fighting of that bloody year—fighting incessant, stubborn, never-relaxing, full of trained fury and mathematical impetus—in this terrible carnival of death, three days are bloodiest, shining with a light more baleful than the rest. These were the days of the Horse-Shoe, of Cold Harbour, and what we call the "Crater"—that is to say, the assault following the explosion of the mine near Petersburg, on the 30th of July. To this latter we now proceed.

The mine was devised by one of the Federal colonels, and was long looked upon very coldly by both Generals Meade and Burnside. Gen. Grant seemed not to be aware of the project.

The originator of the idea, nevertheless, worked at it with all the patience of an inventor, who feels that, however much he may be disregarded now, he will, some day, astonish the world.

The point selected was near Petersburg, on the south bank of the river, and as the opposing lines here approached very near each other, it seemed feasible to



run a subterranean passage beneath the Confederate works, and blow them up.

Once undertaken, the work was prosecuted with ardor. The workmen successfully eluded the attention of the Confederates. The dirt was carried off in cracker-boxes; the long hole grew longer; the mine was becoming a great success—and then Gen. Burnside began to see in it a very brilliant project.

Toward the end of July it was done. It was about five hundred feet long; had lateral galleries; in these galleries were placed kegs of powder, sufficient, it was supposed, to blow up a mountain; all was ready.

Then came the question how to utilize the grand explosion. It was not worth the while of Gen. Grant to go to all this trouble only to destroy a company or a regiment, at the point in question. Obviously, the project admitted of greater results. Lee's lines would be broken; his defences overthrown; if, amid the noise and confusion, the smoke and the uproar, a crack division were to charge over the debris, push on, seize a high crest behind the "Crater," and root themselves firmly there, would not Lee's line be disrupted, his position right and left be rendered untenable, and the most important results, if not the destruction of the Confederates, be attainable?

The prospect was exciting, and all at once a vivid interest in the famous mine was betrayed by the higher officers, who, up to that time, had looked sidewise at the cracker-box operation as the dream of a visionary.

The movement to seize the crest in rear was speedily determined upon, and elaborate preparations were made to deliver the great blow, and follow it up.

All at once, however, a singular obstacle presented itself—an embarrassing question. What division should make the great charge? Should a white division or a black division be selected?

A division of the white troops was selected—by “pulling straws,” Gen. Grant afterwards said, in his quiet, sarcastic way. The negro troops were not to have the honour—they were to follow.

“The first and great cause of disaster,” said the Congressional Committee, which afterwards investigated the facts, “*was the employment of white troops instead of black troops to make the charge!*”

What a statement! Why that “unkindest cut of all” to the brave Army of the Potomac? Did they deserve it?—that army of veterans, who had poured out their blood upon half a hundred battle-fields, who had borne aloft the United States flag amid the thunder of such conflicts as the world has rarely seen, who had met the whole power of the Confederacy for three mortal years; standing erect where the ground was slippery with blood; fighting still, on fields where hope had deserted them; maintaining, in the dark day as in the bright, in the tempest as in the sunshine, that heart of hope which springs from courage and devotion! Unkindest of all, truly, was that cut of the Congressional Committee’s poinard—“*The first and great cause of disaster was the employment of white instead of black troops to make the charge!*”

At half-past four, on the morning of July 30th, a great roar, heard for thirty miles, came from the point selected, and under the feet of Lee’s soldiers manning the breastworks opened the crater of a volcano.

Men were hurled into the air, mere mangled corpses, or torn to pieces where they stood. Cannon were lifted as by the hand of a giant and thrown hundreds of feet. Where a moment before had stretched a line of breastworks, defended by infantry and artillery, was now seen a hideous pit one hundred and fifty feet long, sixty feet wide, and thirty feet deep.

From this had issued a great column of flame and smoke, as of Etna in travail; and now, this terrible crater was a mass of mangled bodies, broken gun-carriages, barrels of cannon; a heterogeneous, hideous, smoking debris of burnt flesh, burnt equipments, and men gasping in the death agony, with flame licking and smoke suffocating them.

Then came the charge. A white division rushed forward, followed by negro troops, and before any resistance could be made by the Confederates, they had passed over the narrow space between the lines, mounted the acclivity, reached the Crater—they were within the Confederate lines.

So far, all had gone well, and there seemed every probability that Gen. Lee would be forced to fight a desperate battle for the possession of the commanding crest in rear of the point at which the mine had been exploded. That crest was not a mere point of military advantage, but a key position. Holding it, as we have said, the enemy would be firmly planted in the very centre of his line of battle; they would command the works to the right and left of it, rendering them untenable; at one blow Lee would be driven to take up an interior line, and that is an operation of the utmost delicacy when pushed by a victorious enemy.

The importance of a rapid and vigorous advance to the crest referred to has never been called in question. That it was not done, profoundly enraged the North, and especially the Congressional Committee; but the origin of the complete failure of the affair appears to us attributable to other causes than the "employment of white instead of black troops to charge."

Instead of commenting, we narrate. Let the reader judge.

The "white division" charged, reached the Crater, stumbled over the debris, were suddenly met by a merciless fire of artillery, enfilading them right and left—of infantry fusillading them in front; faltered, hesitated, were badly led, lost heart, gave up the plan of seizing the crest, huddled into the Crater, man on top of man, company mingling with company; and then, upon this disordered, unstrung, quivering mass of human beings, white and black—for the black troops had followed—was poured a hurricane of shot, shell, canister, musketry, which made the hideous Crater a slaughter-pen, horrible and frightful beyond the power of words.

All order was lost; all idea of charging the crest abandoned. Lee's infantry was seen concentrating for the carnival of death; his artillery was massing to destroy the remnant of the charging division; those who deserted the Crater to scramble over the debris and run back, were shot down; then, all that was left to that struggling, huddling, shuddering mass of blacks and whites in the pit, was to shrink lower, evade the horrible *mitraille*, and wait for a counter-charge of their friends, to rescue them, or surrender.

Such had been the result of the great explosion and charge to cut Lee's line—a mass of disorganized troops, torn to pieces by a fire which they scarcely attempted to return. They were swallowed up in that pit which their own hands had dug; they were being butchered. Gen. Mahone, turning away from the spectacle, muttered:

“Stop the fire! It makes me sick!”

Of the force that charged there, a few only went back—the rest were dead, wounded, or prisoners.

The Federal loss was four thousand men.

So ended the affair of the “Crater,” as the Confederates called it—the “Mine,” as the Federals entitled it.

It was the singular termination of a singular campaign; for in all the annals of the war, there is no stranger chapter than that over-land campaign of Gen. Grant. Beginning with a blind, invisible combat in the depths of a tangled thicket on the Rapidan, it ended for the moment here, on the shores of the Appomattox, in a hideous Crater, where the dead and dying, like the rest, were torn to pieces, amid smoke and flame, with every circumstance of horror. The war had thus grown brutal, terrific, instinct with a species of barbarous fury. Men no longer fought pitched battles in open fields; they grappled in thickets, or in dark mornings before they would see each other, or they were hurled into the air by subterranean explosions. To kill—no matter how—seemed the great aim and object of the combatants. The wild beast was aroused, and in the very clergyman in the pulpit that

spirit of the wild animal is dormant. Judge if it is wanting in the rank and file of an army.

It was this spirit of the tiger that we have seen at its revels, on the days of the Horse-shoe, Cold Harbour, and the Crater.

But nothing decisive was accomplished.

It is true that Lee's rapier was wearing. The sledge-hammer could not break it, but "attrition" could wear away the blade. Slowly, it grew thinner. The edge cut still; how it cut the world knows—at Hatcher's Run, Hare's Hill, The White Oak Road—in a hundred places—but the time was approaching when it must give way.

In the last of these sketches, we shall show the reader that keen and trenchant weapon flashing its old lightnings in the grasp of Lee.

It snapped at Appomattox in that stalwart hand: but, when Lee returned the stump to its scabbard, there was not a single stain upon the blade.

It was the mirror, like its master, of antique faith and honour.

## XI.

### EARLY'S BATTLES.

ON the afternoon of July 11, 1864, any one who had ascended the dome of the Capitol at Washington, a pair of field-glasses in hand, might have seen to the northward, beyond Fort Stevens, through the hot air, rising and rippling, like the breath of a furnace, long, gray lines of infantry, tipped with flashing bayonets, grim cannon coming steadily into position, and red flags clinging to their staffs in the sultry evening, but not so closely as to be taken for the banners of the United States.

In fact, those were Confederate infantry, Confederate artillery, and Confederate flags. St. Andrew's Cross, instead of Stars and Stripes, gray instead of blue, was there in front of Washington. The capitol was threatened; all was in commotion; when a cloud of skirmishers advanced, and cannon began to roar, a Northern writer declares that "the hope at head-quarters that the capital could be saved from capture was very slender."

The aim of this sketch is to describe in rapid summary the events which preceded and followed this event.

Lee was fighting Grant on the Chickahominy when  
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intelligence came that Hunter was advancing up the Shenandoah Valley, burning and destroying mills, barns and dwelling houses, on his way to Lynchburg. It was absolutely necessary to protect that place; it was an important depot, and commanded Lee's communications with the south-west — thus a strong detachment was sent forward from the Chickahominy to check Hunter's advance.

This force was placed under command of Gen. Early, and his orders were brief and explicit. They were to "move to the Valley through Swift Run Gap, or Brown's Gap, attack Hunter, and then cross the Potomac and threaten Washington." \*

The column placed at the disposition of Early was about eight thousand men.

Without delay he pushed after Hunter, who was already near Lynchburg. At his approach the Federal commander made a feeble effort to defend himself, but, before Early's resolute attack, his lines gave way. Then once in motion they did not stop. Gen. Hunter had mercilessly harried the women and children of the Valley, but when bayonets came, he disappeared. Early was on his track, destroyed great masses of his stores, drove him rapidly — soon Gen. Hunter was fleeing wildly through the Alleghanies, westward, like a planet hurled from its orbit into space. When he reached the Ohio, far from all connection with the main army, he commanded only a handful. Early was advancing on Washington.

The march of the Confederate commander was

\* MS. statement of Gen. Early, in exile at Toronto.



rapid. On the 3d of July he was at Martinsburg, and drove Siegel into Maryland. On the 8th of July, he was at Monocacy, near Frederick City, and had defeated Gen. Wallace in a battle of great fury. On the afternoon of the 11th of July, as we have said, his troops came in sight of Washington.

Considering the condition of the weather, this march was tremendous. Under the burning sun of July, the men had tramped on steadily, scarce pausing at night; and, though thousands could not keep up and hundreds dropped by the way, there at last was the long-coveted dome of the capitol in sight; under those roofs, President, heads of departments, citizens, were trembling for the safety of the city.

Such had been Lee's great *coup de main* to deplete Grant's army. He was hemmed in at Petersburg, but one hundred and fifty miles from that great arena, voices called upon Gen. Grant for succor against impending destruction from the very adversary whom he had driven to bay.

The blow failed, the reader will say. Yes, but it very nearly succeeded — nearly accomplished a double object. Washington narrowly escaped capture — Grant narrowly escaped a peremptory order from the President of the United States to evacuate his lines at Petersburg, and return to the defence of the capital.

That was the moment when a single trait of the Federal commander was worth to his government a thousand millions. He clung to his earthworks still, in front of Lee, sending only a detachment. And that detachment arrived in time, and was sufficient.

On the afternoon of July 11th, it seems possible that

Early might have captured Washington. His force was small, from the rapidity of his march under that burning sun ; but the enemy's was smaller. This was probably unknown to him, however, and he waited until the next day. But then the Sixth and Nineteenth Corps of Grant's army had arrived, and when the Confederates pushed up to the works, they saw in front of them the serried ranks, and the familiar hedge of bayonets, of their old foe, the Army of the Potomac.

Then they knew what to expect. War is better than an introduction in saloons. Men who fight know each other, and there never were more intimate acquaintances than the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia.

On the evening of the 12th the Federal infantry sallied forth, and the blades clashed. Early's loss was nothing, but he saw that the capture of the city was impossible — that Hunter, Siegel, and their compeers were ready to close in on his rear from Harper's Ferry — that, front and rear, he was menaced by an overpowering force. He determined, therefore, like a good soldier, to withdraw, and that very night his lines were in motion for the Shenandoah Valley.

Retreating toward Frederick with the supplies which he had collected, he recrossed the Potomac, near Leesburg, pushed on through the Blue Ridge, where he had a heavy skirmish with the enemy, and was once more back in the Shenandoah Valley, whither the Tenth and Nineteenth Corps of the Federal army, under General Hunter, were sent to keep the daring raider in check.

Hunter's success was mediocre. It was an admirable exhibition of partisan warfare on a large scale—that series of movements which followed on the part of Early. Gen. Hunter had no rest. He dared not advance beyond Charlestown, and, with an army about four times the size of Early's, was completely checkmated. Unhappily, this bad fortune reacted on the inhabitants. Gen. Hunter seemed to have woes to avenge on somebody. He burned, near Charlestown—it was his own order—the handsome dwelling house of his cousin, Andrew Hunter, while the daughters of that gentleman occupied it. Ten minutes were given them to retire. Why this was done, it is impossible for the present writer to say. The problem is curious, for men are not generally willing to make their names execrated without reason.

At the end of July, it was seen that Gen. Hunter could do nothing, and Gen. Sheridan replaced him. The campaign of the summer and fall, which attracted so much attention to the Shenandoah Valley—which blazed with the fights of the Opequon, Fisher's Hill, and Cedar Creek—then commenced.

Early's force was under twelve thousand men of all arms. Of this statement, we will speedily present the proof. What was the enemy's?

"To the column of active operation under Sheridan's command," says an able Northern writer,\* "consisting of the Sixth and Nineteenth Corps, and the infantry and cavalry of West Virginia, under Generals Crook and Averill, were added two divisions of cavalry from

\* Mr. William Swinton in "Army of the Potomac," p. 556.

the Army of the Potomac, under Torbert and Wilson. This gave him an effective force in the field of forty thousand men, whereof ten thousand consisted of excellent cavalry—an arm for the use of which the Shenandoah regions affords a fine field.”

Sheridan assumed command early in the month of August, but did little or nothing with his large force until late in September. Why he thus remained inactive, it is hard to say. He had forty thousand men and Early about ten thousand effective. Gen. Early describes his adversary as constitutionally cautious and timid, but he acted with vigor and decision afterwards. However this may be, Gen. Sheridan did nothing until Gen. Grant came to visit him.

This was in September, and Sheridan's lines were along the Opequon, threatening Early's opposite, and covering Winchester. He urged an attack on the Confederate forces. Grant looked at the situation, came to a decision, and said to him, “Go in.”\*

On the 19th, Sheridan accordingly went in, and the battle of the Opequon followed.

So much has been written about this action, and events at the moment attracted so much attention to it, and gave it such celebrity at the North, that we fear our sketch will appear unworthy of the subject. Calmly looked at now, in the light of all the facts, it seems the greatest burlesque of the war.

Gen. Sheridan had from thirty thousand to thirty-five thousand infantry, and about ten thousand cavalry, the best mounted and equipped that had yet taken the field.

\* See Grant's report.

Early had eight thousand five hundred infantry, and less than three thousand cavalry, the worst equipped and mounted that had yet fronted an enemy on the soil of the continent.

This great disproportion was indignantly denied, afterwards, by Gen. Sheridan, and Early insulted in his exile for stating the truth. Here are some data to form an opinion upon. It is worth stopping for a moment to look at them.

“I know of my own personal knowledge,” wrote a Confederate States officer, in the New Orleans *Picayune*, Jan. 13, 1866, “that Gen. Early’s statement is correct, when he states that he had about eight thousand five hundred muskets in the second engagement with Gen. Sheridan. I was a staff officer for four years in the Army of Northern Virginia. I was a division staff officer, Second Army Corps, under Gen. Early’s command, from the time the Second Corps was detached from the Army of Northern Virginia, June, 1864, to the time it was ordered to Petersburg, December 1864. I was present at the battles of Winchester, (or Opequon,) Fisher’s Hill, and Cedar Creek. I know from the official reports which I myself made, and from actual observation at reviews, drills, inspections in camp, and on the march, the effective strength of every brigade and division of infantry under Gen. Early’s command, (of the cavalry and artillery I cannot speak so authoritatively,) and I can therefore assert that *in neither one of these actions, above mentioned, did Gen. Early carry nine thousand men (infantry) into the fight.*”

“One who served on Early’s staff,” writing in the

New York *News*, of February 10, 1866, fully corroborates this statement.

A writer in the Richmond *Times* says: "Of Gen. Early's actual force on the 19th of September, 1864, the day of the battle of Winchester, his first defeat, we can give statistics nearly official, procured from an officer of rank, who held a high command during the campaign, and who had every opportunity of knowing.\* Early's infantry consisted of—total infantry, eight thousand three hundred; total cavalry, three thousand eight hundred; total artillery, fifty-two guns—about one thousand artillerists."

We omit the detailed statement of the strength of divisions, brigades, and batteries. The number of the cavalry is overestimated. Gen. Early states it at "less than three thousand."

The fact is, Early's force of all arms was about twelve thousand. It was thus regarded as truly astounding when Gen. Sheridan wrote that he had captured thirteen thousand men in his campaign, and that Early's casualties in the last months of 1864 could be "safely estimated at twenty-six thousand eight hundred and eighty-one men."

Perhaps the satirical comments of the Richmond *Times* may contain the truth. "There must be some error," says the *Times*, "in Gen. Sheridan's statement of the number of prisoners *captured*. Thirteen thousand will hardly include the number actually taken by him. His numerous and powerful cavalry swept the country, and captured nearly everything that wore

\* Probably, Gen. Gordon is here alluded to.

breeches from twelve to sixty. The number actually captured during the period must be much greater. Probably prisoners under five years old were not registered at head-quarters, and few of the women retained in captivity."

To return to the narrative of events. On the 19th of September Sheridan crossed the Opequon, and threw his thirty thousand infantry against Early's eight thousand five hundred. The battle was a desperate one, and after hours of stubborn fighting, Sheridan had not driven the Southerners a foot.

This statement, greeted with incredulity by some readers, is nevertheless the truth. The resistance made by Early's infantry, and his heroically served artillery, was so obstinate, that, after repeated and vigorous assaults, Gen. Sheridan's infantry had failed completely in forcing back the thin line opposed to them. Whether they would have succeeded ultimately with their infantry alone, it is hard to say. Thirty thousand men ought always to defeat eight or nine thousand — three or four ought to drive one. But did they, in the late war? Answer, Sharpsburg, Chancellorsville, Spottsylvania!

Early held his ground with stubborn courage until four in the afternoon. Then the fatal moment came.

Sheridan massed two crack divisions of cavalry, under Generals Merritt and Averill, on his right; drew up his powerful infantry, with a third division of cavalry covering his left; and at four o'clock, made a general attack. The day was to be decided by the cavalry. From this arm of Sheridan now came the *coup de grace*.

While the infantry lines closed in, in obstinate combat, and Early's entire resources were needed to repulse the assault on his front, the two divisions of Federal cavalry, on Sheridan's right, moved to the Martinsburg road, enveloped the Confederate left, drove before them the badly equipped cavalry there, and at the moment when the hard pressed infantry of Early were breasting the hurricane in front, which threatened to sweep them away, the great force of Federal horse thundered down, with drawn sabres and loud cheers, upon their left flank and rear.

That decided the fate of the day. The battle was lost. The infantry gave back, and nothing but the magnificent fighting of the artillery under those brave spirits, Braxton and Carter, saved the army from rout. The guns were fought to the muzzles. In the midst of a storm of shot, shell, canister, and bullets, the cannoneers stood to their pieces, and the infantry were thus enabled to retire in something like order.

Honour to whom honour is due. At the battle of the Opequon, the infantry made a stubborn, splendid fight; but more stubborn, and more splendid, was the fight of the artillery!

Such was this action. The news flashed northward, and hallelujahs saluted the soap-bubble as it rose, decked out with splendid colours, in the sunshine of victory. But soap-bubbles are fleeting. The day comes when they are pricked and vanish. This one was pricked by Early's pen, from his place of exile, and has disappeared.

Forty thousand men had driven about twelve thousand from the field. There was the whole affair.



But a victory is always a victory. The world at large looks to "results." They laugh when the "details" are discussed.

"It is well for you who are conquered," says the world, "to grumble about everything; but whipped you are."

So be it. Might is right — is it not? Is there any other theory of government existing to-day on North American soil?

So that "Valley of Humiliation," as the North had long called the Shenandoah region, was suddenly changed into a parterre of roses and laurels. Early was retreating — Sheridan was pursuing.

Three days after the Opequon fight, the second act of the bustling drama was played at Fisher's Hill, above Strasburg.

It would be a misuse of terms to call this a battle. It was the attack of a victorious enemy upon a handful, retreating after defeat.

A few words will convey an accurate idea of the affair.

Pushing rapidly on, after the battle of the Opequon, Sheridan came up with Early on the morning of September 22, at Fisher's Hill, near Strasburg. This is a lofty hill, stretching across the valley, from the left bank of the Shenandoah to the North Mountain, and affords an excellent position for a force sufficient to reach from mountain to mountain.

Unfortunately, Early had only about four thousand bayonets — a number painfully unequal to the emergency. The heavy blow on the Opequon had greatly disorganized him; hundreds of his troops were scat-

tered; when he drew up his men on Fisher's Hill, the best informed officers declare that his force was scarcely four thousand bayonets. As to his cavalry, a large portion was detached to defend the Luray Valley; it is doubtful if the Southern force reached five thousand effective.

Gen. Sheridan's must have touched upon thirty thousand, allowing him ten thousand lost at the Opequon. The attack followed.

We have said that the affair could scarcely be called a battle. Early had no sort of intention of fighting there. He had decided to retreat again as soon as night came, for a powerful Federal force was pushing up the Luray Valley to cut off his retreat. The men knew that; and it was this which made the affair so disastrous.

Sheridan repeated his movement of the 19th. 'Turning Early's left, by the Brock Road, with cavalry, he followed up the blow with a powerful infantry force; swept down the works, and assaulting in front, while the Confederates were thus looking to their flank, carried the whole position. Early was driven in disorder from the ground, and retreated up the valley, pursued by his opponent.

Sheridan pushed on to Staunton, forcing Early to take refuge in the Blue Ridge, with the remnant of his army; and then commenced that work of wanton destruction which has made his name more bitterly execrated by the inhabitants than even the name of Hunter.

Before the torches in the hands of his troops, houses, barns, mills, farming implements, all disappeared in

flame. Women and children were seen flying by the light of burning dwellings; corn, wheat, and forage—the only supplies left the inhabitants—were seized or destroyed; the very ploughs and rakes were broken up, and rendered useless. From the women, gray-beards, and children, threatened with starvation, went up a cry to God for vengeance on the author of this enormity.

“I have destroyed,” said Gen. Sheridan, in his official report, “two thousand barns filled with wheat and hay, *and farming implements*; over seventy mills filled with flour and wheat; have driven in front of the army over four thousand head of stock; and have killed and issued to the troops not less than three thousand sheep. This destruction embraces the Luray Valley, and the Little Fort Valley, as well as the main valley.”

By whose orders was that done? Answer, history!

Gen. Sheridan, having thus laid waste the whole valley, fell back to Strasburg, and here, for the moment, the campaign ended.

It was not, however, to terminate for the year. There was this enormous difference between the year 1864 and those which had preceded it, that whereas, in the former years, McClellan, Pope, Burnside, and Hooker had fought pitched battles and then rested, in this year, 1864, Grant never rested, never went into camp, never ceased hammering. The old plan had been tried and had failed. Pitched battles, once or twice a year, accomplished nothing. The Confederate armies must be fought every day; kept eternally under arms; deprived of their very sleep at night.

See how the great drama at Petersburg was played. No rest day or night. Artillery roaring, musketry rattling, mortar-shell bursting. At midnight, at two or three in the morning, when sleet was rattling, snow falling, amid rain, storm, darkness, as in the sunshine, was heard the crash of sharp-shooters and the thunders of guns. "Attention!" was the programme, and it was the right one. Grant's highest praise as a soldier is that he saw this.

So in the valley as in the low-land, fighting, fighting, fighting, was to be the order of the day. Early accepted the programme, and it was the Confederate commander who now, after reorganizing his army, advanced to attack his adversary.

On the 19th of October, Early was at Cedar Creek, near Strasburg, and had delivered a blow under which the army of Sheridan staggered.

The opponents were separated by the waters of Cedar Creek, and the enemy seem to have regarded themselves as secure from attack; but this very security afforded the opportunity of striking them to advantage.

Gen. Gordon, with two or three officers, ascended the lofty summit of the Massanutton mountain, which here dominates the valley, commanding a view of the whole country for twenty miles around, and from this eagle's eyrie, the party saw beneath them the camps of the enemy; the position of Sheridan's army; the road by which it could be approached—the whole "situation." The right of the Federal force was strongly guarded, for there an attack from Early was possible. The left was resting in security, for the steep side of the mountain here seemed to render all approach impossible.

At the foot of this abrupt precipice, however, ran a narrow mountain road, winding between the slanting rock and the river; by this road, Gordon saw that a column could be thrown against the Federal left.

He descended and reported to Gen. Early; the movement was resolved upon; and under cover of darkness the men were moved silently by the narrow road, to the attack, which took place at dawn.

It was sudden, fierce, and completely successful.

Before the rush of the Confederates, the whole left wing of the Federal army fled in wild confusion; the men dashed in among the tents; a few volleys only saluted them; the day seemed won in an instant.

Then Early, with the rest of his troops, crossed Cedar Creek in the enemy's front; pushed on to the field; and before the force thus concentrated, and attacking in front and flank, the whole army of Sheridan gave way.

Victory was in Early's grasp. The Federal lines were driven. Their artillery was all captured, or had rushed to the rear in hopeless, paralyzed disorder. The infantry was stampeded—the cavalry was galloping from the field.

Such was the spectacle which greeted the eyes of the Confederates, at Cedar Creek, on the morning of October 19, 1864.

Unfortunately, another spectacle also saluted them—the rich spoils of the camp—and these unwonted luxuries of every description they paused to seize upon. Instead of pursuing the enemy, falling back now in utter confusion, the men were eating, drinking, and

busy, everywhere, in ransacking the tents, where the flying Federals had left everything.\*

That conduct was unsoldierly, you may say, reader. Let us not attempt to defend it, but let us also note one thing — that this army needed blankets, shoes, clothes, every species of “quartermasters’ stores.” It is easy to recline on a velvet chair, with the feet upon the fender, in the midst of every comfort, and to say, “disgraceful! incredible!” But, believe me, it is hard to shiver at night for want of a blanket — to leave, with naked feet, bloody marks upon a turnpike — to be cold, hungry, in rags — and not clutch at shoes, blankets and food. Those men were brave — none were braver; but human nature is human nature, after all.

Then came the punishment. The delay caused by this disorder among the men, gave the enemy time to reform their lines and come into position. This they speedily did, under the direction of Gen. Wright, commanding the Sixth Corps; for Sheridan was at Winchester. Before Early could press forward, the Federal forces were not only ready to resist his further advance, but were prepared to attack him in their turn.

That attack quickly came. It is said to have been the result of the presence of Gen. Sheridan, who came at full gallop from Winchester, “on a steed shod with fire,” — and with hurrahs, oaths, and the *élan* of his bearing, brought the troops up to the mark. There seems, however, to be some ambiguity upon this point,

\* It is proper to say here, however, that many officers of high character, persistently declare that the troops were ordered to halt, by Gen. Early. The writer was not present, and adopts the account generally accepted.

if we go behind the bulletins sent to Washington, and thence to the newspapers.

“The dramatic incidents attending the arrival of Sheridan,” says a Northern writer, Mr. Swinton, a great admirer of Sheridan, “have perhaps caused Gen. Wright to receive less credit than he really deserves. The disaster was over by the time Sheridan arrived. A compact line of battle was formed, and Wright was on the point of opening the offensive.”

Between Generals Wright and Sheridan we do not undertake to decide. The question is one of little interest. What followed was the defeat of Early in the moment of victory.

In the midst of their great triumph, when they looked upon the Federal army as completely disorganized, the Confederates suddenly saw that army advance upon them in serried ranks. Artillery thundered, musketry crashed; heavy masses of cavalry, with drawn sabres, rushed forward on the flanks, and before this determined attack the disorganized infantry of Early gave back.

Then was presented a spectacle which is said to have been ludicrous, incredible, and without a parallel. The men did not run. There was little of what is called disorder,—of hurry, confusion or demoralization. The men merely looked at the enemy, seemed to come to the conclusion that they would not fight any more that day and simply *lounge*d away from the field. No other word describes it. At a slow walk, and careless, apparently, of shot and shell, the troops abandoned their victory, and recrossed Cedar Creek.

Early had lost, in an hour, the whole fruits of his

victory. The day whose dawn had seen him pushing forward upon the track of a routed enemy, saw him retreating, before it closed, with that enemy pushing him.

There were strange scenes in the late war—there were none stranger than that at Cedar Creek. In one day the Valley was won and lost.

Thereafter there was to be no more serious fighting. Autumn waned away; the bright October woods assumed the russet-brown of November; winter came, and the campaign of the Valley was over.

Lee's great diversion to relieve his lines at Petersburg from the pressure on them, by threatening Washington, had succeeded and it had not succeeded. He was relieved in some measure, for an army of thirty or forty thousand men was kept by the enemy in the Valley; but the relief only lengthened out the long agony which now approached its end.

The Confederacy was tottering. No reinforcements were sent forward by the country to supply the losses which Grant's eternal hammering, day and night, inflicted upon Lee. All hearts desponded; all brows were overshadowed. If there existed, as there seemed to exist, a superstitious confidence in Lee and his poor, gaunt skeleton of an army, that was a conviction unsupported by reason—to expect, much longer, anything from that handful, was hoping against hope.

So dawned the dark year 1865, and those who were behind the scenes knew that the end was near. Sherman had crossed Georgia, and was hastening northward, through the Carolinas, to form a junction with Grant, or cut off Lee's retreat. Johnston was falling



back before him. In the first days of spring, it was plain that the Federal poniard was at the Confederate throat.

Then in February of this last year of the struggle, Sheridan again grappled with Early — if the fall of a bludgeon upon an egg-shell can be so described. The force, small as it was, with which Early had operated, was imperatively needed in the thin lines around Petersburg, and had been called thither. In the Valley now, around Staunton, was left only a small body of about one thousand infantry,—without calvary or artillery,—to merely keep up the show of resistance.

In February, this handful was attacked by ten thousand cavalry under Gen. Sheridan, at Waynesboro. Dispirited, hopeless, oppressed by the public gloom, half-naked, one-fourth fed, and taken by surprise, this little force broke in disorder before the charge of Sheridan's excellent cavalry, scattered into the mountains, and disappeared from all eyes. Early himself narrowly escaped capture. Sheridan pushed beyond the Ridge—the game in the Valley was played.

Then, almost unresisted, Sheridan crossed the Lowland, joined Grant with his horsemen, who had ransacked the whole country and seized on the best animals everywhere—and it was on the backs of Virginia horses that his men pursued Lee in his retreat.

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In the last sketch of this series we shall finish the picture which we have attempted to make of the great struggle between Grant and Lee.

We have seen the Confederate Commander breasting everywhere, throughout the stormy year 1864, the huge

blows of his adversary — have seen with what heroic obstinacy the little Army of Northern Virginia sustained the impact of the gigantic hammer, striking at them day and night. They stood erect, and met its heavy blows still, but all saw that the end was near.

We have chronicled many victories. We now approach the moment of decisive defeat — almost of annihilation. But that did not fright the old soldiers of Lee. They stood by their flag; surrendered only when their great commander gave the order; and, to-day, that thought takes away the “bitterness of death,” — disfranchisement, and the bayonet.

## XII.

### LEE'S RETREAT AND SURRENDER.

IN the month of March, 1865, Lee — that is to say, the Southern Confederacy — was at bay, circled by enemies.

The gigantic drama which for nearly four years had unfolded its bloody scenes on the soil of Virginia, approached the catastrophe. Four acts had been played by such actors as the earth has rarely seen; those acts had been full of hurrying events, fierce passions, terrible shocks; the world, that grand audience, had looked on with absorbing emotion; and now, at last, the curtain was to fall, the actors were to disappear, the lights were to be extinguished, and the audience were to draw a long breath of relief.

There was cause for that emotion. In April, 1865, one of the most illustrious banners of all history was furled; and at the foot of a record blazing all over with glory, was written the sombre word, "Surrender."

Of this great Act V., only a sketch is here attempted. But that sketch will be accurate. The writer did not gain his information of the events described from books, but saw them. They passed be-

fore his eyes, and burnt themselves forever into his memory.

In February, 1865, the roads were drying, and Gen. Grant's heart must have thrilled at the thought, "At last the end is near."

There was no doubt of that fact. The South was tired of the war; the Executive was unpopular; the heads of departments were worse; the Confederate money was mere paper; there was a quarter of a pound of decayed meat for the army; and that army — the sole bulwark of the cause — numbered less than forty thousand men, while Grant's numbered about one hundred and fifty thousand.

Now, one hundred and fifty thousand men, against forty thousand — a large estimate of the Confederate "effective" — is an ugly thing in open field. It is even worse when the forty thousand have forty or fifty miles of earthworks to guard — as at Petersburg. The day when Grant anywhere broke through that thin and tremulous obstacle, Lee was lost.

The "country" — that dull critic of military things — had, however, a different opinion. They scouted the idea. Lee was a Titan of so great bulk that nothing could overwhelm him. The Army of Northern Virginia was unconquerable. Everything was going well. Grant could do nothing. He might stretch his lines from the Jerusalem Plank Road to the Weldon Railroad — from the Weldon Railroad to the Squirrel Level Road — from the Squirrel Level Road to Hatcher's Run — from Hatcher's Run to the Quaker Road — from the Quaker Road to the Boydton and White Oak Roads — to Five Forks — to the Southside Rail-

road — to the crack of doom. It was nothing. Was not Lee there with his great and invincible army — of forty thousand men?

Gen. Lee took a different view of things. There never beat in human breast a braver soul — a truer heart of oak — than in the great Virginian's. But to that trained military brain, one thing was obvious — that when Gen. Grant received his expected reinforcements from Sherman, the lines around Petersburg would be torn asunder, and his army captured or destroyed.

"At this time," says Gen. Grant, "the greatest source of uneasiness to me was the fear that the enemy would leave his strong lines around Petersburg and Richmond before he was driven from them by battle, or I was prepared to make an effectual pursuit."

Lee and his officers understood perfectly the design of their great adversary. The Generals of the Southern army looked at the situation with grim horror, and jested about it.

"If Grant once breaks through our lines," said one of them, "we might as well go back to Father Abraham, and say, 'Father, we have sinned!'"

Such was the situation in the last days of February, 1865, at Petersburg; Lee's army of about thirty-nine thousand men, gaunt and starving, in the trenches; no reinforcements arriving; Grant fighting day and night, while awaiting his great accessions of strength from Sherman; the Southern force dwindling, the Northern force growing larger; the Confederacy prostrate, silent, laboring under a sort of stupor — the

North joyous, laughing, preparing to shout "Hosannah!"

It was plain to all who saw clearly, that unless Lee extricated his army from that man-trap, he was lost. And he made the attempt.

The fact is not in print, but it is a fact that, before the end of February, Gen. Lee gave orders for the evacuation of his lines around Petersburg, and, consequently, of Virginia. At the word, his heavy stores began to move; his artillery and ammunition were sent to Amelia Court House, on the straight line of retreat to North Carolina — and then, one morning, Gen. Lee went up to Richmond.

When he returned to the army, the movement was arrested. From that moment, the Confederacy was dead.

The great soldier, commanding its greatest army, must have shuddered then at the prospect before him. That he did not lose heart, only proves that his was truly an obstinate soul — a fibre which no weight of care, no pressure of discouragement could shake.

Honour is due to the stubborn persistence of Grant, but greater honour to the unshrinking nerve of Lee.

The problem was now reduced to a frightful simplicity. Could Gen. Grant attain the Southside Railroad, on Lee's right? If so, Lee was lost. Figure it out as they might at Richmond; talk as they might about the possibility of holding Virginia; the bad policy of abandoning it — with Grant at Five Forks, the game was ended.

Everything advanced now. The winds of March dried the roads — Grant's gigantic war engine began to

move. That commander was still, however, haunted by his old fear.

While the outside world was blundering on, as to the situation, the two great chess-players were bending over the board; and it was the brow of the Northern soldier that was the most deeply corrugated.

"I had spent days of anxiety," writes Gen. Grant, "lest each morning should bring the report that the enemy had retreated the night before."

And that anxiety was natural. Grant was a good soldier; knew that Lee *ought* to retreat; and Lee, too, knew that he ought to. Why did he not?

Answer, "Department of Rebel Archives," in the city of Washington.

A month had passed since that attempt to evacuate Petersburg, and Gen. Lee was still there. Those who saw him then will remember that his expression and whole bearing were of supreme repose. Never had his smile been sweeter, his eye more limpid and unclouded.

The March winds blew, the roads grew firm, the moment had come, and Gen. Grant fixed upon the last day of the month for a great assault upon Lee's right, with the view of seizing the Southside Railroad.

One would have said that his adversary saw the shadow of the gigantic arm raised to strike. Before the hammer fell, the world was to witness the last great offensive movement of Lee—the final lunge of the keen rapier which had so often drunk blood.

To relieve his right from the enormous pressure there—to open his line of retreat for a junction with Johnston, and to end at one blow the elaborate programme

of his opponent — Lee, on March 25th, had recourse to a project of unsurpassing boldness. This was to attack his adversary's centre, at Hare's Hill, near Petersburg, cut the Federal line, root his whole army then between the Federal wings, and either force Grant to retire his whole left wing, or march upon and destroy it.

There was so much genius and audacity in this conception, that it ought to have succeeded. It did nearly succeed. Here are the facts briefly narrated :

Fort Steadman, the point selected for assault, was a powerful Federal work opposite Petersburg, defended in front by abattis, and every species of obstacle, and flanked by other forts commanding it.

The Federal and Confederate lines were at this point less than two hundred yards distant from each other, and each was eternally on the watch.

Surprise seemed impossible, — attack hopeless. In the night, toward morning of March 25th, Lee surprised and attacked.

The storming column was three or four thousand men, under Gordon — that brave of braves — the man who never failed to do the utmost that could be done, — who electrified the soldiers that fought under him, and whose name will electrify history. Gordon went through the abattis in the dark March morning, over the Federal breastworks, driving before him, or capturing the Federal infantry there — seized Fort Steadman — was at dawn rooted immovably in the centre of Grant's line.

The last great blow of the Army of Northern Virginia had been struck. Gordon's sword-point was at the



throat of Grant — an hour afterwards his whole command was dead, or captured, or retreating.

A few words will explain that. He was not supported by the troops which Gen. Lee had ordered to follow him — the Federal forts, right and left, opened a terrible fire upon him; he was ringed round with artillery, crushed by heavy masses of infantry — scarce was there time for the remnant of his little force to save themselves.

The great blow had completely failed — nearly two thousand men were dead or prisoners — the last hope of successful retreat to North Carolina was lost.

What was foreseen by Lee speedily followed. Grant threw his whole force, now amounting to one hundred and sixty thousand men, against Lee's entire front — making his heaviest attack on the Confederate right.

The trumpets had thus sounded; the knights, with lance in rest, had rushed together, and the soil trembled. The days thundered, and the nights were like the days. From the White Oak Road, west of Petersburg, to the Williamsburg Road, east of Richmond, cannon glared and roared, musketry rattled, mortar shell rose, described their fiery curves, like flocks of flame-birds, burst, and rained their iron fragments in the trenches. The cannoneer, sighting his gun, fell pierced by bullets entering the embrasure; the musketeer, who sank to sleep in the trenches for an instant, was torn asunder by the mortar shells, and never woke. At midnight, gaunt and dusky figures, moving to and fro in the baleful light, plied their deadly work, never resting, scarce ever eating — not hoping, but fighting still.

Those who remember those days do not dwell with serene pleasure on the souvenir. A lurid glare seems ever to hover over those scenes of nightmare, when two armies were in the death-wrestle.

Let others chronicle the events of those days of decisive struggle — the present writer has neither space nor inclination. Bloodshed is repulsive; an army of supremely glorious history undergoing the ceremony of annihilation is not a cheerful spectacle.

Lee fought to the end. The soul of the Confederate commander seemed only to grow more resolute and unconquerable, as he felt upon his breast the pressure, ever heavier and more deadly, of the Federal anaconda, wrapping its huge folds around him.

History nowhere exhibits a more obstinate combativeness, a more inexorable will, a more trained and daring courage than that of Lee in the fights around Five Forks.

When his right was cut, repulsed, crushed there — when Warren and Sheridan had gained a victory there, resembling in every particular — in relative numbers more especially — the victory of the latter over Early at the Opequon — when the whole Confederate right wing was completely torn to pieces, and the rest of the little army driven back into Petersburg — then, when all was lost, when every heart despaired, when every brow was overshadowed, Lee was still as cool as on the days of Fredericksburg or Chancellorsville; in his eyes was the same clear light; his voice was as grave, measured, and courteous as before.

This soldier was grand and imposing on the days of

his great battles. On the 2d of April, 1865, he was sublime.

On that morning the long agony was decided. The right wing of the Confederate army was captured or dispersed. Grant had broken through in front of Petersburg. A. P. Hill was dead, and his little handful, called a corps in a spirit of bitter humor only, scattered. The Federal army was pouring in one huge mass upon the few thousands of men still in line of battle.

On the green slope of his headquarters, a mile or two west of the city, Gen. Lee was looking through his glasses at the Federal column pushing on to charge his inner breastworks. On the left of Petersburg Gordon was thundering,—fighting, with his mere skirmish line, the triple Federal order of battle. Longstreet was coming in with his skeleton regiments from the James. The tragedy touched its last scenes.

When the bullets of the Federal infantry began to whistle round him, and their shot and shell to tear up the ground, Gen. Lee slowly mounted his iron gray, and rode toward his line.

“This is a bad business, Colonel,” he said, in his calm, deep voice, wholly untouched by emotion.

As he spoke, a shell burst above him, and killed a horse at his side; but a slight movement of the head and a latent fire in the eye were the only proof that the fact had attracted his attention. Meanwhile his ragged infantry—scattered, a mere skirmish line along the low inner works—were laughing, greeted him as he approached, with cheers, and exclaimed, with the mirthful accent of schoolboys,—

“Let 'em come on! We'll give 'em h—l!”

That expression was not classic, reader, and it may offend your idea of decorum. But admit that it was "game." The men of that brigade were laughing in face of triple lines of Federal infantry, advancing to destroy them.

At night Gen. Lee put his army in motion — crossed the Appomattox — blew up his magazines, and dawn saw fifteen thousand unshaken veterans steadily marching up the north bank of the stream, commanded in person by Lee.

They were out of the trenches, and in the budding woods. They were moving, not massing — going to fight, not to stand a siege in ditches full of mud and water — and Lee, on his gray horse, was leading them ! The writer of this page sat his horse, and looked curiously into the faces of the troops as they passed — not a face was gloomy or careworn — not a man had lost the heart of hope.

And they kept that heart to the last. They starved, and grew faint, and fell by the wayside, on that terrible retreat ; but as long as they could handle a musket, the men fought. Ask their veteran opponents of the old Army of the Potomac if they did not.

A freshet in the Appomattox swamping the bridges, delayed the crossing of the army to the south side again. It was not until Wednesday, the 5th of April, that Lee had concentrated his little army at Amelia Court House.

Glance now at the tragic situation of affairs. Lee was retreating, or trying to retreat from Virginia. Richmond was evacuated, like Petersburg. The officers of government — President, secretaries, all — had hur-

ried southward. There was no longer any Confederate Capitol; or, if there was any, it was at Lee's head-quarters. What remained of the great edifice, tottering to its fall, was held aloft upon the bayonets of the Army of Northern Virginia.

What was that army? Here is the statement of one who had the best opportunity of knowing the exact truth. Colonel Walter H. Taylor, A. A. G. of the army, in MS. statement, says, —

*“Strength at Petersburg, April 1, 1865:*

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| “Infantry (effective).....             | 37,000 |
| Around Richmond ( <i>locals</i> )..... | 2,000  |
|  | <hr/>  |
|  | 39,000 |

“This I believe to be accurate.

“On the 2d of April, the troops were much scattered — that is, separated from regular commands. Pickett had been sent up to Five Forks. Anderson had been sent up Southside Road with three brigades. Our lines had been cut on Hill's front, and then Heth was cut off; so that it was impossible to say what force Gen. Lee took with him when Petersburg was evacuated, but I think somewhere in the neighborhood of fifteen thousand infantry. He was afterwards joined by Heth and Anderson. At the time of the surrender, we had in line of battle about eight thousand muskets. We surrendered, officers and men, a little over twenty-six thousand, including all departments and arms of service.”

Such was the force — some twenty thousand “effective” troops — with which Lee faced the one hundred

and fifty thousand men of Grant, hurrying forward to Burksville Junction, on the Danville Railroad, to cut off and destroy him.

To this point had all things come on April 5th. And now what was Lee's design? What had been his intention in evacuating Petersburg? Was he out-generaled, checkmated — out-thought as out-fought by Grant?

A few words will answer these questions. Lee never had the least intention to surrender; let that be stated first. He foresaw the almost mortal blow at Petersburg; the shadow of the approaching fate ran on before, and he prepared for the ordeal. The first great question was that of rations. There was rarely at Petersburg as much as three days' supply of bread and meat for the army; now, when it was going to make a rapid retreat, that little supply would fail. Rations must be sent from the South to *meet the army on its march*. The order was given. Amelia Court House was the point to which the supplies were ordered. Lee would march thither, provision his army from the railroad trains sent up from North Carolina, destroy his surplus baggage, mass his little handful of tried veterans, move toward Johnston, and cut his way through any force in his path.

This was his plain and simple programme. To provision his army at Amelia Court House, attack the scattered Federal forces, not yet massed across his line of retreat, burst through them, and, forming a junction with Johnston, retreat into the heart of the Gulf States. The rest was left to the future. If the war could be carried on, he would carry it on. If not, he would be

able to make terms of peace, and surrender, *en règle*, at the head of his army. Better that than to be tracked like a wild beast, torn at every step, and die — panting bleeding, starving — circled by enemies.

Two foes reversed this entire programme — man and the elements. The freshet in the Appomattox delayed his crossing until Tuesday, April 4th. Grant was hurrying by the straight road to cut him off, but there was still time, when the last, the fatal, the irresistible blow fell. Reaching Amelia Court House, with an army, staggering and starving for want of food, Lee looked around, and saw not a trace of flour, bacon or corn — nothing. The trains from the South, loaded with rations, had duly arrived. At the Court House, a telegram from Richmond said, “Bring on the trains.” They continued their way, and reached Richmond; the rations were thrown in the street; the cars were loaded with the rubbish of the department, hurried Southward, and when the army of Northern Virginia reached the Court House, starving, falling by the way, and perishing from exhaustion, they found nothing.

That blow was terrible; those who reversed Lee's orders assumed a frightful responsibility. It is only just to say that *the trains only, when emptied*, are said to have been referred to in the telegram, and no one acquainted with the brave and resolute Executive, Jefferson Davis, will believe him capable of that terrible fault. Let history decide, and place the blame where blame is due — we narrate. The trains passed through the Court House upon Sunday, April 2d; their contents were thrown out in the streets of Richmond;

that night the same cars were hastening southward, and when Lee arrived, there was nothing.\*

Then despair must have knocked at the doors of that stout heart. Those who saw Gen. Lee at this moment will not soon forget his expression. The hope and defiant courage of a soul which nothing could bend, had not deserted him, but that instant was enough to test the fibre of the strongest heart.

All his plans were thus overthrown. He could no longer advance; he must stop to collect provisions for his men. He could no longer form line of battle and fight; he must cut up his army into foraging parties — half going out into the country to collect bread and meat for the other half. Starving men do not fight — starving horses do not pull artillery. There is something which paralyzes courage, hope, skill, nerve, heroism — it is famine.

From all these circumstances, thus narrated briefly, resulted that terrible delay. On Wednesday, April 5th — that is to say, three days after the evacuation of Petersburg — Lee was still at Amelia Court House. His veterans were scattered around him, in the fields; his trains halted — wagons, artillery, carriages, and caissons — because the horses could no longer draw them. Parties were penetrating everywhere to the houses, appealing to the inhabitants with, “Bread, bread, the army is starving!” — and all this time Gen. Grant was hastening forward over the line of the Southside

\* We have a detailed statement of the events above referred to from an officer then in Richmond, who witnessed all. We would present that statement were any end to be reached. It would be useless. The facts are not denied.



Railroad to Burksville Junction; concentrating there corps after corps of his superbly equipped and provisioned army, to meet the little handful of Lee, when they attempted to continue their retreat.

One course only was left to Lee — to change his line of retreat, and make for the Virginia mountains. If he could attain Lynchburg, he was out of the enemy's clutch. That sole hope remained to him, and placing himself at the head of his veterans, he resolutely began his march toward Farmville.

From that moment commenced the horrors of a retreat which will remain forever famous in history — famous for the baleful tragedy of the subject, but more famous still for the heroic nerve of the little army of Southerners who marched on, fighting day and night, and starved and sunk down, and died without a murmur.

Who can paint it? What man of the South has the heart to describe that retreat in detail, tracing step by step the great tragedy to the fall of the curtain? Not the present writer, who saw it all; starved with his comrades; heard the bay of the Federal war-dogs day and night on the track; and now, when two years have passed, recalls with sombre emotions that bitter frightful, hopeless struggle to emerge from the toils in which numbers had enveloped the little fainting handful — fainting, but defiant and unconquered to the last.

Here are some memoranda only of the retreat. Lee had just begun to move from Amelia Court House, when news came that the Federal cavalry, pushing ahead, had attacked and burned his ordnance trains at Paynesville. Thus even his small numbers were to be

paralyzed — the army must be disarmed in advance. Lee moved on steadily, reached the vicinity of High Bridge on the 6th, and here the Federal cavalry and infantry burst into the trains; tore to pieces their rear-guard under Ewell and others; captured, destroyed, or dispersed the whole; and pressed forward to annihilate the remainder of the army.

This was just at nightfall, and the woods glared; the sky was a great canopy of crimson; artillery roared; muskets cracked; the Federal forces rushed on to finish their work, when in their path they saw a hedge of bayonets, flanked by cannon, whose grim mouths seemed to say, "Come on!" In fact, Gen. Lee had hastened with a handful of men to erect this barrier between the disordered remnant of Ewell, Anderson and Custis Lee — and it was a magnificent spectacle, the reception of the old cavalier by the half-starved, unarmed, and tumultuous crowd, who seemed in a wild rage at having been thus driven by the enemy.

With hands clenched and raised aloft; eyes fiery and menacing; accents hoarse, defiant, full of unshrinking "fight," the ragged infantry rose from the ground upon which they had thrown themselves around the cannon, exclaiming, —

"General Lee!"

"It's old Uncle Robert."

"Where's the man who won't follow old Uncle Robert?"

Fancy that scene, reader, if you can. These tatterdemalions, burning with rage and defiance; with hands clenched, eyes like coals of fire, hoarse and vi-

brating voices — faces gaunt, dirty, emaciated by hunger, but showing, by the close, set teeth under the rough-bearded lips, that the nerve of the bull-dog was all there still — imagine this scene, lit up by the glare of the burning wagons, by the horizon all flaming, above which rose, red and threatening, the Federal signal rockets, and in the midst of all, on his iron gray, the old cavalier, Lee, sitting calm and collected, with a face as unmoved as on some peaceful parade.

Before that rock, bristling with bayonets, the Federal wave went back. Night fell, and with cannon thundering upon the long drawn line of Federal horsemen, ready to rush forward on his rear, Lee continued his retreat, crossing the river at Farmville, and making for Lynchburg.

Then commenced, on the 7th of April, 1865, the most terrible scenes of the retreat. Men were fighting, falling, and dying all around. The musket was fired, then it fell from the nerveless hand. The men charged, drove back the enemy, swarming upon them, pursued with wild yells, triumphant cheers — then they staggered and fell. All along the immense line of trains the enemy attacked; the “stragglers,” as they were called — that is, the men who could not carry musket or cartridge-box — fought them with sticks and rocks. The horses and mules were fainting from exhaustion, like the troops. Wagons mired, and the teams could not move. Cannon sunk in mudholes, and the horses fell and died beside them, up to the girth in ooze. The teams had become skeleton animals, with emaciated limbs, and eyes full of dumb despair. The most cruel blows scarcely pushed them to a slow walk.

Corn there was none, or if a little was discovered, the starving troops clutched it, struggled for the ears, crushed the grains between their teeth like horses, and swallowed it half masticated. Meanwhile, to the right, to the left, in rear, in front, the enemy thundered; and the muskets of the Confederates replied. Lee was fighting still — meant to fight to the end.

Hope had not even then deserted that breast, cased in "triple steel." When, on the 8th, Gen. Pendleton was deputed by the corps commanders of the army to inform Gen. Lee that surrender, in their opinion, was inevitable, Lee exclaimed, with flushed cheeks:

"Surrender! I have too many good fighting men for that."

On the morning of April 9th, as he drew near Appomattox Court House, these fighting men were reduced to less than eight thousand, and the enemy had struck a last blow. Sheridan's cavalry, pushing, on had captured and destroyed a train of supplies sent down from Lynchburg, and Grant's infantry had hurried up, and massed in front. Then Lee's last hope was gone, and nothing remained for him but to surrender the army.

Up to that moment he had resolutely refused to do so, when Grant summoned him. On the 7th, and again on the 8th, the Federal commander had written him notes, urging the hopeless situation of his army; but as late as the evening of the 8th, the day before the surrender, Lee replied:

"To be frank, I do not think the emergency has arisen to call for the surrender of this army."

A Federal writer sees in that reply "a kind of grim humor;" and in truth there was something grim, if

not humorous, in such an answer on that 8th of April. Gen. Grant was "up"—on Lee's front, rear, right, and left—with about one hundred and thirty thousand men. On all sides, the Confederates were enveloped; infantry, cavalry, and artillery ringed them round; through every opening they saw the swarming Federal horse, the glittering Federal bayonets; from every knoll grinned the muzzles of Federal cannon.

The prey was hunted down; one hundred and thirty thousand men had surrounded and had in their clutch less than eight thousand armed infantry, and the commander of the eight thousand, when summoned to surrender, replied that in his opinion the emergency for that step had not arisen.

That was on the 8th. On the morning of the 9th, as we have said, the tragedy had reached the last scene.

As the little skirmish line of Gordon mounted the Appomattox Court House hill, the advance force of the Federal army was extending steadily across his front—infantry, cavalry, and artillery barred the way.

Then a last attack was made, and the Federal lines were driven nearly half a mile. Raked by the artillery of Col. Carter—that brave and resolute spirit—their ranks were broken, and Gordon made his last great charge. Before it the huge mass fell back, but then the great wave returned. Artillery thundered, musketry rattled—fainting, staggering, dying of starvation, the men fought on.

Then the last moment came. The time seemed to have arrived when the Old Guard of the Army of Northern Virginia, under Gordon and Longstreet, be-

beath the eye of Lee, would be called on to shed over the last scene of the war, the glory of an heroic death. Longstreet was marching slowly and steadily from the rear to the front. Every veteran grasped his musket and moved on with measured tramp,—when all at once Gordon's poor little skirmish line was seen emerging from the woods, still fighting as they retreated; and on the left, beyond the forest, a great mass of dark cavalry came steadily on, with drawn sabre, to the work of butchery. Then, at that last moment, something like a magical calm, a mysterious silence, came. The storm lulled all at once, as if at the bidding of some enchanter's wand; and on the heights of Appomattox appeared a dark-blue column, waving in front of them a white flag.

Lee had surrendered the army. The odds of one hundred and thirty thousand against eight thousand was too great, and the long and terrible wrestle ended.

When the old cavalier came back from his interview with Grant, the men crowded around him with pale faces, eyes full of fiery tears, and bosoms shaken by fierce sobs. Does any reader regard this picture as overdrawn? Ask those who saw it; demand of any one present whether the firm hand of Lee was not necessary to suppress the veritable rage of many, from General to private soldier. But Lee was still the great directing head of the army; what he had done, all felt was well done; and the men crowded round him, uttering hoarse exclamations.

“I have done what I thought was best for you,” he said; “my heart is too full to speak, but I wish you all health and happiness.”

The day passed, then the night—on the 10th the army surrendered formally, stacked arms, abandoned their columns, and dispersed to their homes. The Federal commander had acted throughout all with the generosity of a soldier, and the breeding of a gentleman. Not a cheer was heard, not a band played in the Federal army. When far-off a shout rose over the woods, one of the Federal officers hastened to apologize for it.

“That is the rear-guard—those fellows did none of the fighting,” he said.

As to those who had fought—the veteran Army of the Potomac, tried in battle, in victory, in defeat, in all the hard life of the soldier—they did not cheer when their old adversaries surrendered. They were silent, and saluted when a ragged Confederate passed. They felt what surrender must be to the men of that army which they had fought for four years—and not a cheer or a brass band was heard.

Why humiliate their old enemies? Why make more bitter their misfortune?

On the 10th of April, 1865, the old soldiers of the Army of the Potomac stretched the hands of comrades to the foe they had fought so long. To-day they are ready to do as much, if the civilians would only let them. There is a personage more ferocious and implacable than the fiercest soldier—it is the man who has staid at home and never smelt the odor of powder;—who, while the rest fought, clapped his hands, crying:

“Fight on, my brave boys! You are covering yourselves with glory, and we are watching you!”

If the civilians had been at Appomattox, they would

have butchered or handcuffed the men of Lee—would you not, messieurs? You would certainly have split the air with every brass band of the army, and shouted “Hosannah” at their humiliation.

Well, see the difference between men who fight, and men who do not. The old soldiers of the Army of the Potomac kept quiet—when Lee appeared at Gen. Grant’s quarters, every head was uncovered. Victory saluted defeat.

So ended the war. With Lee’s surrender, all other armed resistance disappeared, and the great conflict which for four years had desolated Virginia, terminated suddenly as a tragedy terminates at the fall of the curtain.

We have followed rapidly the steps of that gigantic struggle; looked on its shifting scenes, its varying fortunes. The aim of the writer of these pages has been to draw a truthful outline of the mighty wrestle, and to give to friend and foe his just due. If he has been unjust, it was not willingly. Nothing has been extenuated on the one side—on the other naught has been set down in malice. Of the great American Revolution, the world will doubtless always differ in their views; parties will hold opposing opinions, and during the lifetime of the present generation those opinions will doubtless be colored by the rancor of partisan feeling.

What men will not differ about, however—what all will agree upon—is the reluctance with which the great Commonwealth of Virginia entered upon the struggle, and the constancy and courage which she brought to the long, bitter, and terrible ordeal. Right



or wrong, she was brave — was she not? Ask her desolated fields, her vacant firesides, her broken hearts. Prostrate, panting, bleeding at every pore, she was faithful to the last, in defence of her principles; and rather than yield those principles, dear as her heart's blood, she bared her breast for four years of destroying war, to the torch and the sword — the one laying waste her beautiful fields, the other drinking the blood of the flower of her youth.

In that sombre conflict she dared all, risked all, suffered all — and to-day has lost all.

No! Her stainless escutcheon is still left to her — and her broken sword, which no taint of bad faith or dishonor ever tarnished.

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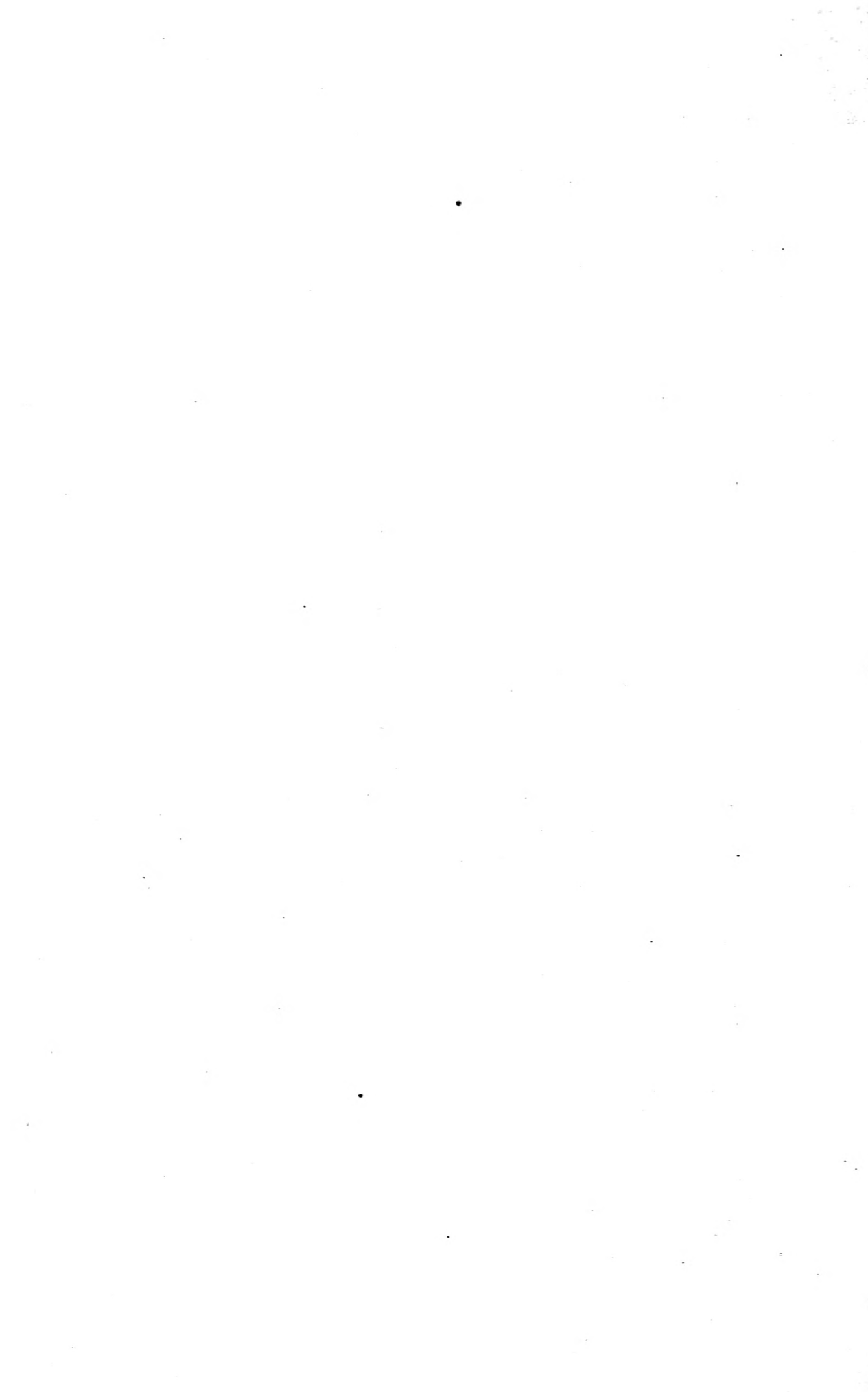
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